THE FEMALL GLORY.

OR,

The Life, and Death of our Blessed Lady, the holy Virgin MARY, *Gods owne immaculate* Mother: To whose sacred Memory the Author dedicates these his humble Endeavours.

A Treatise worthy the reading, and meditation of all modest women, who live under the Government of Vertue, and are obedient to her Lawes.

By ANTH. STAFFORD, Gent.

LONDON,
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TO THE MOST Happy Mistresse of all imaginable Graces, which beautifie and ennoble both body and minde, the Lady *Theophila Coke*.

Madame,

MY Motives for the Dedication of this ensuing Treatise to your

Ladiſhip, are three; your Knowledge, your Vertue, and my owne Obligation. For the firſt; as it is to you a ſingular Ornament, and Content, ſo is it to me a ſpeciall comfort; for you cannot delight more to underſtand, then I doe to be underſtood. Had I written to your Ladiſhip in the Roman Language, the French, the Italian, or the Spa-

Spaniſh, they had beene almoſt as familiar to you as this your native Tongue, in which you are Miſtreſſe of ſo great an Elegancy, that no words are ſo fit as your owne, to eternize your owne actions. But theſe are only the conveyances of Learning, the vaſt body whereof you have fathom'd, and in every ſeverall part of it are Mi-

ſtreſſe of as much, as the want of an Academicke education, and the manifold divertments incident to your ſexe, permit. And of this ineſtimable treaſure, Modeſty keeps the key, and ſhuts out Oſtentation, not ſuffering a word to iſſue forth without a Grace to attend it. Hence it comes to paſſe, that as it is impoſsible to handle perfumes without bea-

bearing away part of their ſent; ſo to converſe with you without ſavouring of your goodneſſe. Nor does your Diſcourſe alone reliſh of your ſweet Diſpoſition; for you reade not of a vertue, which you forthwith put not into act, & adde to it a greater beauty, then it had in the Example from which you deriv'd it. The conſideratiõ, Madam, of theſe your

your Excellencies confirm'd in me a beliefe, that this portraiture (though imperfect) of the prime Preſident of femall Perfection, would prove a Preſent moſt acceptable to your Ladiſhip, to whoſe innocency you make as neer an approach as any thing mortall can doe. Should I ſay you are without ſinne, I ſhould impiouſly contra-

tradict the Scriptures; ſhould I ſay you have any, I ſhould unjuſtly goe againſt mine own knowledge, for neither I, nor I think, Envy her ſelf could ever yet diſcover in you the leaſt imperfection. Sure I am if you have infirmities, they are inteſtate, unleſſe you place your owne Conſcience for a witneſſe, which it will not better become

come to judge it ſelfe, then it will doe my Charity to cleare it. Nor is this purity of yours froward and formall, but gentle, free, and communicative. You ſhew the world that there is a chriſtian freedome, of which we may lawfully partake. By your faire Demeanour you cleerly demonſtrate, that ſanctity may be without Auſterity, and vertue ſecurely

curely ſociable, and that ſhee is more fruitfull in ſociety, than in ſolitude. This teſtimony, Madame, Truth, and the people (whoſe Regiſter I am) commanded mee to give You, and commend to Poſterity. I cannot deſcend to ſuch baſeneſſe, as to flatter you, yet (if I ſhould,) would not you be flatter'd, who are like a

ſweet

ſweet Inſtrument, that ſends forth a delightfull ſound without being ſenſible of its owne Harmony. No, no, heaven forbid my lines ſhould bee like thoſe Sacrifices, out of which they uſed to plucke the heart, but leave the tongue behinde. I ſeriouſly proteſt, that if you were Empreſſe of the World, and were withall as eminent in Vice, as you

you are in Vertue, I would not give you the leaſt praiſe in exchange for all your large poſſeſſions; for no gold ſhall ever winne mee to guild ſinne. And I freely confeſſe that if within the large circuit of my Converſation, or Reading, I could have found a feminine Example, fairer then your owne, to her perufall, if living, I had commended

mended this Treatise, if dead, had bequeath'd it to her memory. Such a prostituted Eloquence, as made Apologies for *Messalina*, and *Quartilla*, are to me odious. But wee must warily distinguish betweene a grosse Flattery, and a due Praise; the latter of which, saith *Pliny*, no man contemneth till hee hath left to doe things praiseworthy. As we

Plinius secundus in Epist.

we cannot over-worſhip the true Deity, ſo wee cannot over-praiſe a true Piety. It onely now reſteth, that I offer up to your Ladiſhip, two Petitions; the firſt of which is, that you would vouchſafe to permit this Booke, under your gratious Patronage, to doe that where you are not, which you performe where you are; that is, to confirme

the good, and convert the bad. The next is, that your Ladiſhip would be pleaſed to accept of my ſubmiſsive Gratitude, which, though great, can be no way proportionable to the infinity of your favours. Theſe I would endeavour here to ſumme up, were I not deterred from the attempt by Impoſsibility, and your nobleſt Nature, to which no-

nothing is more displeasing; than thankes for an old Benefit, nothing more pleasing, than the conferring of a new. I choose therefore rather to be argued of Ingratitude, than of offending your Ladiſhippe, whoſe ſervice next to that of GOD, I juſtly glory in, it being the

onely Honour now left,

Your Ladiships most humble,

loyall Servant,

ANTH. STAFFORD.

To the Feminine Reader.

YOu are here presented by an extreme Honourer of your sexe, with a Mirrour of Femall perfection. It is not a Glasse wherein a Babe, a Foole, or a Monster may see it selfe, as well as you. By this you cannot curle your haires, fill up your wrinckles, and so alter your

looks, that Nature who made you, knowes you no more, but vtterly forgets her owne Workmanship. By this you cannot lay spots on your faces, but take them out of your soules, you may. By this you cannot compose your Countenances, but your Minde: you shall, and give them a never fading Beauty. In this you may discerne all Vertues, and all Graces at their full growth. Here you may discover Charity distributing, Temperancy abstaining, Patience suffering, Humanity yeelding, Chastity resisting, Valour combating, and Prudency assi-

assisting all these. Here any ornament you already have, you may better, and any you have not, you may purchase at the easie rate of reading and imitating. Here you may learne to transforme your ugly Vices into as amiable Vertues. This Glasse will not flatter you, nor if you be angry with it for shewing your Deformities, can you breake it. Both the matter, and the reflections here are all internall, and therefore not tangible. This is shee, whose Emblems ingenious Antiquity made an Vnicorne, laying his head in the lappe of a Virgin. This is

the faire tree, whose lovely fruit once tasted, expels not for a time onely, but for ever the venome of the most deadly sinnes. This is she, who was on Earth a Confirmer of the good, and a reformer of the reprobate. All her Visitants were but so many Converts, whose bad affections, and erroneous opinions, the sweetnesse of her discourse had rectified. The Leprosie of sinne was her daily cure, and they (whom vice had blinded) were by her restored to their inward sight, and their prostrate soules adored divine, Majesticall vertue, residing in this

sa-

ſacred Temple. The conference with her rais'd them above themſelves, and enfranchis'd their ſoules till then, chained to their bodies. The knowledge of her, humbled the moſt proud natures, for the luſtre of her Merits, render'd their owne obſcure. Make the emulation of this chaſte Entitle your onely ſtudy! and not in words onely, but in deeds alſo ſhew your ſelves Proficients; for Vertues meditated, and not acted, do but puffe us up the more, wee eaſily beleeving, that wee are what we reſolve to be. On this, ground your beliefe, that ſhee amongſt

amongst you who shall constantly treadin her paths, shall at length arrive at the Celestiall Paradice which now she inhabits, and shall receive this salutation, not from an Angell, but from God himselfe; Welcome thou faire soule, full of Grace, enter into the Glory, I have prepared for thee.

TO

To the Masculine READER.

FOr to you also (though of a different sexe) this booke belongs, to whom the sacred subject of it brought the same eternall benefit, shee did to her owne kinde. Neither doth she onely require your Gratitude, but your Imitation, whose meanest perfection farre excels all your

your ſo long vanted maſculine merits, I doubt not but by the more, and leſſe knowing of you, I ſhall be diverſly judged. The firſt will argue mee of indiſcretion in that I choſe not a Matter of a higher nature whereby to make a demonſtration of my ſufficiency. To theſe I ſhape this anſwer, that my Invention could not ſoare higher, for whether wee regard her perſon, or her divine Gifts, ſhee is in Dignity next God himſelfe. There is nothing of ſo ſublime a ſtraine as Vertue, which enters Hea-

ven,

ven, when Subtility and Curiosity are justly excluded. It is vertue must save us; for in knowledge the Divell himselfe farre exceeds us. There is no Argument, as I take it, so important, or concernes us so much as that of our salvation. These men would have mee busie my selfe in the Physicks, to finde out of what, not wherefore I am made: Or in the Mathematickes, to learne how farre it is to Heaven, not how to come thither: Or in Divinity, to bee inquisitive whether or no Christs miraculous

culous feeding of so many, was by augmentation, or multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes: Whether or no they who were born with sight, & afterwards lost it, being restored to it againe by Christ, saw better after the Cure, than they did before their blindenesse; And whether or no the Dead, who rose with our Saviour, ascended with him, or were againe reduct to dust. To these needlesse accute follies I aspire not. How many are there now in Hell, who while they liv'd here, were esteem'd

esteem'd the Organs of the Sciences, the Temples of VViſedome, nay Oracles, as if they had beene form'd in Heaven, and ſent downe hither full fraught with Gods owne ſecrets, yet now deteſt their former vaine Knowledge, as much as the Darkeneſſe they lived in? But in this kingdome of Woe and Horrour, none of vertues ſubjects ever reſided. Let them therefore cenſure on, they ſhall not ſo much as ſhake my ſecurity; for I know it fares with univerſall Learning, as with the

Vni-

Vniverſe, wherein there are more Delinquents then Iudges. The opinions of theſe I can well tollerate, becauſe they proceed from Science, though erronious. But there are ſome whom I have heard to paſſe their caſting verdicts on the moſt meriting Authors, who deſerve themſelves to bee hang'd for ſo often violating their owne mother tongue, did not their ignorance pleade their pardon. Let theſe poore wretched things, who what they heare in the laſt compa-ny, vent for their owne in the

next, ſhare amongſt them my ſcorne, and pitty, as being far below my anger. I am not ignorant that he who feares the pale meager Family of the Zoili, muſt onely write to his owne *Lar*. If to the truely vertuous, the truely underſtanding, I can approve theſe my humble indeavours, and draw any one ſoule, but one degree nearer to goodneſſe, my holy ambition, and my no ſmall labour ſhall receive an ample ſatisfaction.

It now remaines that as to theſe latter, I ſeeke to approve

all my actions, ſo to them I likewiſe eſſay to iuſtifie this preſent worke. I am the firſt (to my knowledge) who hath written in our vulgar tongue on this our bleſſed Virgin, drawne thereto I confeſſe by the ſtrength rather of affection, than of ability. Yet withall I profeſſe that I am her admirer, not her Idolater, and that I no way allow of their profane cuſtome, who robbe God of his Honour, and beſtow it on her. But this I will ſay, that though I impute not the late troubles and afflictions

of

of the Proteſtant party in *Germany*, to the ſmall reverence there paid her (many of Gods iudgements according to Saint *Auſtin*, being ſecret, none uniuſt) yet truely I beleeve that the undervaluing of one ſo great, and deere in Chriſts eſteeme, cannot but bee diſpleaſing to him, and that the more we aſcribe to her (ſetting Invocation apart) the more gratious we appeare in his ſight. I have beene as cautious in the penning of this Treatiſe, as poſſibly I could, and (in imitation) of Vertues

owne ſelfe) have kept the meane. But all pretenders to Divinity know, that without the helpe of Eccleſiaſticall Hiſtory, we can ſpeake little of her life, or death, ſo ſparing is the holy Writ in the mention of her. The ſcholaſticall and Eccleſiaſtical Writers inſerted in this Booke to truſt, or diſtruſt too much, is alike erronious, and therefore I referre all to the diſcretiõ of the Reader. I will onely adde this; that ſince the finiſhing of this ſtory, I have read a booke of the now Biſhop of *Chicheſter*, entituled

tituled *Apparatus, &c.* and am glad to finde that I have not digreſſed from him in any one particular. I conclude with this proteſtation, that if I have ſwerved in any the leaſt point from the tenents received in the Engliſh Church, I ſhall bee moſt ready to acknowledge my ſelfe a true Penitent. Farewell.

Meditationes poeticæ & Christianæ in annunciationem beatæ Virginis, *W. A.*

Aue Maria.

GAuisa es quondam, perque omnia secula gaude,
Omnia quæ gaudI secula tempus habet.
Stipasti quæ latitia castum alueare alui.
Æquum est latitiæ mella ut in aure bibas.

Tu

Tu gaudi verbum peperisti, & dicit
Avete
Omnibus: atque omnis terra revi-
brat Ave.
Sed tu salvificum genuisti in secula
Salve:
Nostra ecclie nudum nomen hono-
ris, Ave.

Gratia plena.

Quam sunt plena suo distenta alvea-
ria melle,
Quod flore evario Chymica stillat
apis:
Quam plena est adamante suo, teres
area gemmæ,
Qua quod non recipit, prensat amo-
re decus:
Quam plena est radijs solaribus aurea
luna,
Oppositum toto cum bibit orbe jubar:

Quam plena eſt Charitum, Charitum
modulata chorea,
Tam plena eſt decoris virgo Maria
Dei.
Invide quid fontem criſpas? mirabile
non eſt
Si gravida eſt Charitum, qua gravidata
Deo eſt.

Dominus tecum.

Humani lapſum generis ſub triſtibus
umbris
Luxerat Angelici curia tota chori,
Et reparari iterum coniuncti numinis
anſa
Virgineo optavit poſſe videre ſinu.
O homo quam ſit grata ſalus tibi pro-
pria! quando
Angelica exultat turba ſalute tua.

Benedicta tu in mulieribus.

Mor-

Morborum mors intravit longo ordine mundum,
Fœminea quondam solicitata manu:
Sic Charitum Vita *intravit longo agmine mundum,*
Fœminea Mariæ solicitata fide.
Fons nobis vitæ, vitâ pariendo fuisti:
Nosque erimus laudis fons, benedicta tibi.
Nam dignum est per quam cæpit benedictio vitæ,
Vt sit præ sexu ter benedicta suo.

Et benedictus fructus ventris tui.

Eructasse bonum pleno de pectore verbum,
Divino sese prædicat ore pater.
Hoc Christus verbum est, quod de bonitatis abysso,
Effudit casto virgo Maria sinu.

Gra-

Gratum eſt, & iuſtum pariter, Bene-
dictio ut ipſa
Fuſa repercuſſo ſit benedicta ſono.

Spiritus ſanctus ſuperveniet in te.

Vt Zephiri teneris ubi ſibilat halitus
hortis,
Dulcis adoratæ depluit aura roſæ:
Spiritus at flori tam molliter oſcula-
tur
Vt non virgineos explicet ore ſinus:
Sic Mariam ſanctus Deitatis ſpiritus
afflat:
Numina & caſtus flumina fundit
onyx.
Nec tamen æterni ſolvit tibi clauſtra
pudoris:
Statque tuæ implicito culmine turbo
roſæ.
Chriſtum illibata de virgine creditæ
natum;
Sic illibato eſt cortice natus odor.

Et

Et virtus altissimi obumbrabit tibi
Epigramma dissertum.

Vt genuit magnum pater extra tempora natum:
Tempore sic natum virgo Maria brevem.
Prodijt in mundum sibi par, substantia dispar:
Vt sine matre Deus, sic sine patre puer.
Grande puerperium Deus est: maiusque videtur
Non eguisse viro, non eguisse Deâ.
Casta fugit lucem, virgo paritura sub umbrâ:
Et paritura umbram præstitit ipse Deus.
O condescensus nova gratia: luminis Author
Ipse creaturæ vertitur umbra suæ.

Vtque

Vtque invisibilis lucis pater auth
habetur.
Sic est visibilis virgo Maria genu
Visurus numen Moses penetravit
umbram:
Tunc Christus numen tunc pat
umbra fuit.
Migremus tenebræ ad lucem, dum n
mine verso,
Proque die tenebra est, pro tenebr
que dies.

THE

THE GHYRLOND of the bleſſed Virgin MARIE.

HEre, are five letters in this bleſſed
Which, chang'd, a five-fold (Name,
myſterie deſigne,
The M. *the* M*yrtle*, A. *the*
A*lmonds clame,*
R. R*oſe*, I. I*vy*, E. *ſweet* E*glantine.*

Theſe forme thy Ghyrlond. Wherof Myrtle *green,*
The gladdeſt ground to all the numbred-five,
Is ſo implexed, and laid in, between,
As Love, here ſtudied to keep Grace alive.

The

The ſecond ſtring is the ſweet Almond *bloome*
Ymounted high upon Selinis *creſt :*
As it, alone, (and onely it) had roome,
To knit thy Crowne, and glorifie the reſt.

The third, is from the garden call'd the Roſe,
The Eye of flowers, worthy, for his ſcent,
To top the fairèſt Lillie, now, that growes,
With wonder on the thorny regiment.

The fourth is humble Ivy, *interſert,*
But lowlie laid, as on the earth aſleep,
Preſerved, in her ántique bed of Vert, (creep
No faith's more firme, or ſtat, then, where't doth

But, that which ſummes all, is the Eglantine,
Which, of the field is clep'd the ſweeteſt brier,
Inflam'd with ardor to that myſtick Shine,
In Moles *buſh, un-waſted in the fire.*

Thus, Love, and Hope, and burning Charitie,
(Divineſt graces) are ſo entermixt,
With od'rous ſweets and ſoft humilitie,
As if they 'ador'd the Head, wheron th'are fixt.

THE REVERSE on the backe ſide.

THeſe Myſteries do point to three more great,
On the reverſe of this your circling crowne,
All, pouring their full ſhowre of graces downe,
The glorious Trinity *in* Vnion *met.*

Daughter, and Mother, and the Spouſe of GOD,
Alike of kin, to that moſt bleſſed Trine,
Of Perſons, yet in Vnion (ONE) divine.
How are thy gifts, and graces blaz'd abroad!

Moſt holy, & pure Virgin, bleſſed Mayd, (Tower,
Sweet Tree of Life, King Davids *Strength and*
The Houſe of gold, the Gate of heavens power,
The Morning-ſtar, whoſe light our Fal hath ſtay'd

Great Queen of Queens, moſt mild, moſt meek, moſt
Moſt venerable. Cauſe of all our joy. (wiſe,
Whoſe chearfull look our ſadneſſe doth deſtroy,
And art the ſpotleſſe Mirrour to Mans eyes.

The

The Seat of Sapience, *the most lovely Mother,*
And most to be admired of thy Sexe,
Who mad'st us happy all, in thy reflexe,
By bringing forth GOD's *onely* Son, *no other.*

Thou Throne of glory, beauteous as the Moone,
The rosie Morning, or the rising Sun,
Who like a Giant hasts his course to run,
Till he hath reach'd his two-fold point of Noone.

How are thy gifts and graces blaz'd abro'd,
Through all the lines of this circumference,
T'imprint in all purg'd hearts this virgin sence
Of being Daughter, Mother, Spouse *of* GOD!

A Pannegyricke upon the bleſſed Virgin MARY.

WHat eye dares ſearch the brightneſſe of the Sun?
What Pencill draw it? what conception
Is cleane enough thy pureneſſe to deſcry,
Or ſtrong enough to ſpeake thy Dignity
Bleſt Mother of our Lord, whoſe happy ſtate,
None but an Angels tongue did firſt relate?
Thou wert on earth a ſtarre moſt heavenly bright,

That didst bring forth the Sunne
that lent thee light.
An earthly vessell full of heavenly
grace,
That broughst forth life to *Adams*
dying race:
For God on earth thou went a
royall throne,
The quarry to cut out our corner
stone,
The chosen cloth to make his
mortall weed,
Soile blest with fruit, yet free from
mortall seed.
In marriage bands thou leadst a
Virgin life,
And though untouch'd, became
a fruitfull wife.
Though thou to aged *Ioseph* wert
assur'd,
No carnall love that sacred league
procur'd,

All

All vaine delights were farre from your assent,
For chast by vow you seal'd your chastinent.
Thus God his Paradise to *Joseph* lent,
Wherein to plant the Tree of life he meant,
To raise a birth miraculous, and by
His sacred wayes of power disclose that high
And holy Mystery, which Angels (though
So full of light) desir'd to peepe into.
When thou thy Maker didst bring forth, and he
Whose age had beene from all eternity,
Was borne an Infant from thy blessed wombe.

He lay encloſed in that narrow
roome,
Whoſe greatneſſe heaven & earth
could not containe.
Who made the world, and natures
did ordaine,
Was made of thy fleſh; he, whoſe
open'd hand
Feeds all the Creatures both by
ſea and land;
That even to thee thy life and be-
ing lent,
Did from thy breaſt receive his
nouriſhment.
His birth no humane tongues were
fit to ſing.
Th' Angellike Quire did greet
their new-borne King,
So bright a conſort, and ſo ſweet
a lay
Made night more faire and cheer-
full than the day,

And

And little *Bethlem* with more glory fill'd,
Than all the Roman Pallaces could yeeld.
How wondrous great is then thy happineſſe
That wert his Mother: but who can expreſſe
So high a bliſſe: when we deſire to fame
Some other Maid or vertuous womans name,
When we of other Ladies write the lives,
Of chaſte Maides, happy Mothers, conſtant Wives,
Such as beſt Writers have renown'd of yore,
When we have told their noble vertues o're,
We draw examples, and beſides their owne

Faire stories, praise them by com-
pariſon.
But in thy life we cannot; thou
alone
Canſt not at all admit compariſon.
So far thy happy name and ho-
nour lives,
Above all other Mothers, Maids,
or Wives,
That 'twere a ſinne, when we thy
ſtory tell,
So much as once to thinke of Pa-
ralell.
Wee'l let thee in thine owne pure
titles live,
And ſpeake no praiſe of thee but
poſitive,
As when we ſay all ages, nations
all
Shall thee moſt happy among
women call,

That

That of the greateſt bleſſing God
ere ſent
To ſinfull man, thou wert the in-
ſtrument.

T. M.

A Panegyricke on the blessed Virgin MARY.

I Doe not tremble, when I write
A Mistresse praise, but with delight
Can dive for Pearles into the flood,
Fly through every Garden, wood,
Stealing the choice of flowrs, & winde,
To dresse her body or her minde,
Nay the Saints and Angels are
Not safe in Heaven, till she be faire,
And rich as they, nor will this doe
Vntill she be my Idoll too:
With this sacriledge I dispence,
No fright is in my Conscience,
My hand starts not, nor do I then
Finde any quakings in my pen;
Whose every drop of Inke within,

Dwels

Dwels as in me, my Parents ſinne,
And prayſes on the Paper wrot,
Have but conſpir'd to make a blot,
Why ſhould ſuch fears invade me now,
That writes on her? to whom doe bow
The ſoules of all the iuſt, whoſe place
Is next to Gods, and in his face
All creatures and delights doth ſee
As darling of the Trinitie;
To whom the Hierarchy *doth throng,*
And for whom Heaven *is all one ſong.*
Ioyes ſhould poſſeſſe my ſpirit here,
But pious ioyes are mixt with feare.
Put off thy ſhooe, 'tis holy ground,
For here the flaming Buſh is found,
The miſticke Roſe, the Iv'ry Tower,
The morning Star, & Davids *bower,*
The Rod of Moſes, *and of* Ieſſe,
The fountaine ſealed, Gideons *fleece,*
A woman cloathed with the Sunne,
The beauteous Throne of Solomon,
The Garden ſhut, the living ſpring,

The

The Tabernacle of the King,
The Altar breathing ſacred fume,
The Heaven diſtilling honie-combe,
The untouch'd Lilly, full of dew,
A Mother, yet a Virgin true,
Before, and after ſhe brought forth
(Our ranſome of Eternall worth)
Both God & man, what voice can ſing
This myſtery, or Cherubs wing
Lend from his golden ſtocke, a Pen
To write, how heaven came downe to men.
Here feare, and wonder ſo advance
My ſoule, it muſt obey a Trance.

A Panegyricke dedicated to the eternall Memory, and glorious Fame of the blessed Virgin MARY.

LEnd me *Elias* Chariot to inspire
My feeble Muse. Wheeles of celestiall fire
Beare her from Earth, purge ev'ry looser thought
This duller ayre, or that grosse Dunghill wrought.

Let

Let all her ſtraines be pure, cloath her in white,
And innocent wit; let her chaſte ſoule delight
In no adulterate line, no wanton ſenſe,
Let all her knowledge be her Innocence
As *Adams* ere he fell; then will ſhe raiſe
A maiden ſpirit to chant a Virgins praiſe.
Yet let her not be barren, but bring forth
Zeale to each eare ſhe ſtrikes, ſo ſhall her worth
Shine like the Saint ſhe ſings of, wonders doe,
And be as ſhe a Maide, and Mother too.
Inſtruct me you nine Orders how to ſing,

Or

Or let a Cherubin pluck me from
his wing,
A quill to write the ſtory, or en-
treate
Your brother *Gabriel* from his
bleſſed ſeate
To viſit Earth, and teach mee,
leſt I miſſe
To ſalute MARY in a voyce like
his.

Sleepe on your eyes faire Virgins
long hath ſtaid,
Riſe, and to *Bethlem* run to ſee a
Maide.
Riſe Matrons, in your armes your
infants beare,
To *Bethlem* haſte, and ſee Gods
Mother there.
Matrons, and Virgins runne, haſte
all to ſee,

Both

Both joyn'd in one a fruitfull Chastity.
Then every Matron this great wonder tell,
And every Virgin chant a Canticle,
Sing blessed *Mary's* praise, sing that for her
Jehovah rivall'd with a Carpenter.
Mary deriv'd from two most glorious Springs
The bloud of *Levies* Priests, and *Judah's* Kings,
Which did as in a Type foreshew her story, *
To be the Mother both of Grace and Glory.
Sing of her birth, how not redeem'd with prize,
Her Father payd her as a sacrifice

*Austin, Baronius, and others, hold that she was descended from the Tribe of Levi, which the now Bishop of Chichester opposeth.

Due

Due to his God, when others ran-
som'd be
With Shekles, as it were a sla-
very
To serve their Maker, and the Pa-
rents feare
To trust him with the wardshippe
of their heire.
But the blest Maide, whom An-
gels now admire,
(Glad they have got her to en-
crease their Quire)
In child-hood first her Virgin
taske begun,
And in the Temple pray'd a pret-
ty Nun;
That the first breath she suckt was
holy aire,
And the first word she learn'd to
lispe, was pray'r.
There might you see an Infant
Saint out-vie

The Levites in Devotion, and an eye
Cast up to heaven ere it the earth had knowne;
Whole showers of teares in pious sorrow showne
For *Eves* offence, not hers, shee did begin
To learne Repentance ere shee knew to sinne.
Each morning strove the early Larke, and she
Who first should chant their sacred melody.
He that had seene her might by very sence
Have propheciedan Age of Innocence
Reborne with her. I should have thought her one
Of the great Cherubins sent from its throne

To

To breed a race of Angels, and ſupply
Their roome that fell by proud Apoſtaſie.
Thus ſhe grew up in zeale, and holy feares,
Yet ſtill Devotion would out-bid her yeares,
Till * at fifteen (when others holier fires
Grow to more wanton, and unchaſte deſires)
The Prieſts bethought a husband for her bed;
But *Mary's* thoughts all unto Heaven were fled.
Yet was ſhe *Ioſephs* Spouſe, not with th'intent
T'unlooſe her Virgin Zone, but to prevent
The ſutes of others, and enjoy more free

* *The opinion of* Mantuan, *how true I know not.*

The treasure of unspotted Chastity.
Who will beleeve the wonder I have said?
Mary a husband tooke, to live a Maide.
Dare not thou *Ioseph* to approach too neare
This heavenly Arke, thy God inhabits there.
Touch not that sanctifi'd, and hallow'd wombe,
Whence thy salvation, and the worlds must come:
For 'tis not, Carpenter, thy Art that can
Repaire the Fabricke of selfe-ruin'd man:
Mary must Bride to thy Creatour be,
And clad in flesh part of the Trinity.

See

See God hath ſent from his eternall ſphere,
Bleſt *Gabriel*, his fire-wing'd Meſſenger,
Who crown'd with Glory, and a wreath of Light,
Salutes the Virgin, doubtfull of the ſight,
And courts her thus. Haile *Mary* full of grace,
(Wherewith a bluſh roſe in her baſhfull face,
And verifi'd his words) the Lord, quoth he,
Hath left his Heaven, and comes to dwell in thee;
Bleſt amongſt women, in thy ſexe divine;
For ev'ry breſt ſalvation ſucks from thine.
Suppoſe a King had ſome gay favorite ſent

With powerfull Rhetoricke, and
Court complement
To win a Country Girle. What
could ſhe gueſſe
But 'twas ſome ſcorne on her un-
worthineſſe:
So *Mary* ignorant what her Ver-
tue was,
(For ſhe had made Humility her
glaſſe)
Doubts what the words ſhould
meane, wonders to heare
This ſalutation, and miſtruſts her
eare.
And when the Angell tels her of
a Sonne,
To ſit on Princely *Davids* royall
Throne,
To rule the houſe of *Iacob*, and to
be
A ſceptred Prince to all Eterni-
ty,

Her modeſt ſoule no vaine Ambi-
tion ſway'd,
She rather choſe to live an hum-
ble Maid,
Then a Queene Mother. How can
I, quoth ſhe,
Who nere knew man, and am a
Votary
Nere to know any, teeme with
ſuch a birth,
Who would not for the treaſure
of the earth
Be falſe unto my vowes? My love
is pray'r,
And piety all the ſonnes I meane
to beare.
But when the Angell did Gods
will relate,
That he would get a ſonne that
might create,
She yeelds a Handmaid to her
Lords deſire.

O I but thinke how ſuch ſtrange
newes would fire
Some Ladies hearts with pride,
when they ſhould heare
Gods growne enamour'd on their
beauties were!
How they would thinke them-
ſelves worthy the bed
Of their Creatour, and advance
their head
Above Mortality, promiſing their
eyes
To be made Stars to glorifie the
skies!
But *Mary's* zeale ſwell'd higher
then her pride;
Nothing mov'd that, not when
old *Zachary's* Bride
Felt the Babe dance, and leape
within her wombe,
For joy the Mother of his Lord
was come,

But

But bleſs'd her God regarded her eſtate,
And ſung not to her ſelfe, *Magnificat*.
Nor when the Shepheards did relate their ſtory
That was as full of wonder as of Glory,
But tooke the Angels Hymne, and chanted then
Glory to God on high, good will to men.
Nor when three Kings did to her Cratch reſort,
Did ſhee conceive her Stable turn'd a Court,
When to a Prieſt, a Prophet, and a King,
They ſev'rall brought their ſev'rall offring.
She tooke not to delight a wanton ſenſe.

The pretious Myrrhe, and odrous
Frankincenſe,
Nor did with covetous greedy
eyes behold
The Eaſterne wealth (the third
mans treaſure) gold;
Her Sonne, and Saviours honour
to prefer,
Was Mirrhe, was Frankincenſe,
was gold to her.
Her life was all Humility, Muſe
make haſte
To ſing her Death, and how her
life being paſt,
Heaven entertain'd her; for their
Hymnes divine
Are fitter to relate her praiſe, than
thine.
Thou haſt not power t'unfold
with what a feare
She fled to *Ægypt*, and continu'd
there

To

To ſave her Infants life, not skill
to tell
How much ſhe joy'd at ev'ry Mi-
racle.
Preſume not thou to number
what her eyes
Showre forth in teares, as on the
Croſſe ſhe ſpies
Her Sonne, and Saviour, nor what
care ſhe ſhow'd,
To gather up the drops of bloud
that flow'd
Pure Balſome from his ſide; nor
venture on
To write with what a violent
zeale ſhe run
To begge with *Ioſeph* he a Tombe
might have,
By whom we all are ranſom'd
from the Grave.
Me thinks I ſee how by his Croſſe
ſhe ſtood,

How

How her ſad eyes vide teares, as
he dropt bloud;
Her eyes more ſad, cauſe they re-
tain'd their ſight,
And could not doe as Heaven did,
looſe their light.
Her armes expreſſe the Croſſe
whereon he dide,
As if ſhe too meant to be cruci-
fide.
I ſee her vaile rent; for it could
not be,
The Temple ſhould expreſſe
more griefe than ſhe.
Me thinkes I heare her plaints. *O*
Chriſt that I
Should give thee fleſh; for elſe thou
could'ſt not dye!
Divinity is from all paſſion free,
That thou canſt ſuffer torments, was
from mee.

Where-

Wherefore thy Virgin Mother here vowes all
Her houres to prayers, till thy laſt trumpet call.

And here I crave no pardon, if my penne
Stabbe thoſe preſumptuous, and o're curious men:
Whoſe bold Diſputes dare into queſtion call
What ſonnes ſhe had, and whether Chriſt was all.
As if a mortall durſt to *Mary* come,
And court Gods widdow, to prophane her wombe,
As if the Mother Maide that ſtile gave ore,
To be a Mother, but a Maide no more,

Or

Or ſhe that God and man had
borne, would be
A Mother now to beare Huma-
nity,
As ſhe from heaven to earth, her
thoughts had caſt,
And could love *Ioſeph*, that had
God embrac'd.
No, having layne, great heavens
immortall King,
Vnder the ſhadow of thy gratious
wing:
She Turtle like would a chaſte
widdow be,
And vow'd to love no other
Dove but thee,
But ever mourn'd thy abſence, till
her eyes
Had ſpent her ſoule in teares, and
love-ſtrain'd cries,
Crackt her poore heart-ſtrings.
Having caſt away

The

The toylesome burthen of unweldy clay,
With pure, and ayrie pinions, hence she flies,
And forsakes earth, to seeke thee in the skyes.
When she arriv'd where her blest Mate doth dwell;
What Poets, Priests, or Prophets rage can tell
The entertainements, welcomes, joyes have beene,
Vnlesse in *Pathmos* he had Visions seene.
We may suppose that Angels clapt their wings,
Powers and Dominions showted, all the strings
Of Seraphins tun'd high, lowd Hymnes did play.
A troope of Virgins on the *Milky way*

Met

Met her in ſnow-white robes, and
Convoy had
Legions of Martyrs, all in ſcarlet
clad.
Ieſuah with Captaines, *David*
ſainted Kings,
All tendred their reſpects. The
Pallace rings
With acclamations, *Eve* runnes
forth to ſee
Whence ſprung the fruit, cur'd of
the forbidden tree.
Sarah makes haſte, her Ladies
wombe to bleſſe,
Without whoſe birth, the curſe
of barrenneſſe
Had laine upon her, though ſhee
had a ſonne,
And had brought twenty *Iſaacks*
forth for one.
Rebecca with the better of her
twins,

And

And *Rachel* with her *Ioseph* too begins
To chant her praise. The brave Bethulian Dame,
Victorious *Iudith*, to her welcome came
With troopes of Amazons. The Sheban Queene,
(Who now the new *Ierusalem* had seene)
Runs to the sight, and wistly gazeth on
The Mother of the mightier *Solomon*.
There met with Saints, and Angels, all desire
To bid her welcome, thus, in a full Quire.

Come blessed Virgin, fixe thine
eyes upon
This glorious Throne,
And on the right hand, there
behold thy Sonne.

Behold his hands, his feet, his
pierced side,
That for us dide,
Whose very wounds in heaven
are Deiside.

Those glorious lips, which once
drew milke from thee,
Shall one day be
The doome of Soules, to blisse, or
misery.

Blest

Bleſt wombe, the myſteries that
ſprung from hence,
Daz le our ſenſe,
Whoſe onely Eſſence is Intelli-
gence.

Finite thou were, yet infinite in
thee
Wee treaſur'd ſee,
Mortall, yet Mother to Eter-
nity.

Thy Sonne made of thee, made
thee. Faith aſpire
One ladder higher,
Elder then's Mother, antient as
his Sire.

'Tis strange thou should'st both
Maide and Mother be;
Stranger to see
In one soule both God, and Humanity.

As hee was God, thou still art
Mayd. Who can
This wonder scan?
Hee made thee Mother, as hee
was but man.

Thou suckl'st him upon thy
breasts, and he
To ransome thee,
Open'd his side upon his passion tree.

Come

me blessed Virgin, and receive
thy Crowne
Of full Renowne,
Where Death, and Time have
laid their Scepters downe.

There sing with us, how three doe
sit upon
The glorious Throne;
One of which three is two, yet
all but one.

THus, holy Virgin, have I ſhadow'd o're
Thy Picture in a rude unpoliſht ſcore,
That wiſh'd t'have limm'd it with as lively grace,
As ever Painter drew the ſweeteſt face.
Yet would I not idolatrize thy worth,
Like ſome, whoſe ſuperſtition ſets thee forth
In coſtly ornaments, in cloaths ſo gay,
So rich as never in the Stable lay.
Theſe make thy Statues now as famous be
For pride, as thou wert for Humility.
I cannot thinke thy Virgin baſhfulneſſe

Would

Would weare the Lady of *Lorettos* dreſſe,
Though farre more glorious robes to thee were given,
Meekeneſſe, and Zeale on Earth,
Glory in Heauen.

Take then the honour thou haſt juſtly wonne,
Praiſe aboue Angels, but below thy Sonne.

THE

Faults escaped in Printing.

PAge 74. line 4. reade, glorious. 101. in the margin, reade, not onely many Moderne. 128. 14. for it, reade, is. 161. 16. for penurious, reade, poore. 182. 19. Lambertus. 194. 14. in stead of, for, reade, from. 205. 6. Adelphonsus. 213. 17. for consent, reade, concent. 246. for Christs, r. Christ. 247. for brought, r. broughtst. 248. 11. for silent, r. a silent. 248. 13. dele, but.

THE FEMALL GLORY:

OR,

The life of the Virgin MARY.

HIstory offers to our view, Myriads of holy Virgins in Beauty, and vertue equally attractive, whose due praise the Catholike Church doth at this day solemnely sing, but with a

more elevated voyce (as duty on our part, and merit on hers commands) the laud of that most excellent Princesse, the Virgin Mother of God. There be who affirme that what ever the Creator saw beautifull in heaven, or earth, he bestowed in the limming of this rare Piece, not that she might be stiled the most faire amongst the daughters of women, but by a heavenly prerogative, the alone Faire, the alone Lovely. Looke how many parts, so many arts you might discerne of the Celestiall Limmer. And this is no way repugnant to reason it selfe; for if Christ was faire above the sonnes of men, should not she be so above their Daughters, since from her alone he received his flesh? *Gregory Nazianzen* proclaimes that she surpass'd all women in loveli-

Her externall Beauty.

Galatinus.

neſſe. *Andræas* ſayes that ſhe was a Statue carved by Gods own hand. Others of thoſe firſt, and purer times not without admiration, obſerve that God was almoſt fifty Ages in the meditation of the ſtructure of this ſtately Pallace. And truely our beliefe may eaſily digeſt this, that his omnipotency would make her fit to be the Mother of his Son, Empreſſe of this lower world, and the bleſſed Conduit through which ſhould paſſe the myſtery of mans Redemption. Yet finde I a ridiculous deſcription of her in *Epiphanius* a Prieſt of *Conſtantinople*, who affirmes that her Face was of the colour of Wheate, her viſage long, and her noſe ſutable, her haire yellow, and her eye-browes blacke. But what authority he hath for this, neither I, nor I thinke he himſelfe can

well tell; for ſurely ſimple Antiquity was not either curious, or skilfull to deliver it by tradition, or picture to poſterity. I verily beleeve he had it from his owne dreames, or rather fancy. *Mopſa* is as much beholding to our incomparable, and inimitable *Sydney* for a delineation, as is my divine ſubject to this curious Impertinent. Whether her beauty chiefly conſiſted in colour, in Symmetry of parts, or both I know not: ſure I am the ſtreame of other more judicious, pious Authors carries me not into an opinion, but a ſtrong beleefe of her heavenly forme. Cardinall *Cajetan*, and *Galatinus*, (with what truth I cannot ſay) certainely with more probability then he, maintaine that her excellent temperature, her conformity of members,

her

her firme and constant Complexion free'd her from all contagion and diseases. And *Dyonisius* goes further, affirming that she was no other then a walking Spring. Such variety of sweet odours her very pores breath'd out on all that came neare her; as we reade of *Alexanders* living body, and the Ægyptian Carkasses which by a thin spare dyet observed in life, even after death sent forth a most sweet perfume. *Sylvanus Razzius* recounts a pleasing story of a certaine Clerke, who by many prayers implor'd, and obtain'd the blessing of her sight, but with this condition, that he should see her but with one eye, and that one he should lose. He willingly embrac't it, but when she appear'd dress't in all her Beames, not being able with one eye to take a full view

of her, he opened the other alſo, chuſing rather to forfeit his ſight for ever, then to looſe one minute of the inconceiveable content he enjoyed in the ſight of ſo glorious a ſpectacle. Were this true, it would make a brave example of a devout ſoule raviſht with the view of a divine object.

Her internall Beauty.

If the Inne was ſo ſplendent, ſo ſumptuous, what may we thinke of the amiable gueſt, that lodg'd in it, her minde, beſet with thoughts cleare, and radiant as her owne eyes? He that dares attempt the expreſſion of theſe her internall gifts is ignorant of her ſublimity; he who dares not, knows not her humanity, her ſweetneſſe. As no ſtile can aſcend ſo high as her exalted worth, ſo on the other ſide none can deſcend ſo low as her Humility.

Humility. Encourag'd therefore by her meeknesse, not my owne sufficiencie, I shall endeavour to limme her soule in little (since in great neither my time, nor ability will let me) which will appeare an enterprise as hardy, and vaine as his who should strive to limmit the light, or circumscribe the Ayre. Know then, modest Reader (and receive this knowledge with the same extasie, and zeale I write it) that her internall luster was farre greater then her externall, like in this unto the Tents of Kedar, as soone cover'd with dust, and almost burned up with the heat of the Sunne, as soone beaten, and shaken with tempestuous weather, but in the meane time inwardly all glittering with glory, and magnificence. O ye Angels, to you it is onely given, not to sinne, but on

her is conferr'd what you cannot merit, to beare, and the reparation of mans ruine. The Apoſtles, thoſe holy Tapours of the primitive Church ſometimes burnt dimme, and were obſcur'd with the fogge of ſinne, but her brightneſſe nothing vitious could leſſen, much leſſe utterly extinguiſh. She was, indeed, vertues prime, and great example, and all the accompliſht women of the Ages paſt, preſent, or to come have grace, and happineſſe to the full in being called her imperfect Coppies.

Here my Invention treads a Maze, and my heart is divided betweene an earneſt deſire to praiſe her to the height, and a holy feare leſt in that praiſe I ſhould trench on Gods own peculiar Attributes. That ſhe was no way inferiour to her

her Sonne, according to the flesh, I dare not with some avouch, who magnifie her in a phrase that violates her modesty, and makes her blush at her owne exaltation. Her lowlinesse was such that it was nearer the rejecting of all commendations then entertaining a comparison betweene her selfe, and him to whom she had professed her selfe an hand-maid. And no lesse is her shame, or rather, indeed, her trembling when pennes prophanely prodigall ascribe that honour to her which is onely proper, and due to that Deity from which she received her grace, and being. I will not, with *Lipsius* ascribe as much to her Milke, as to her Sonnes Bloud. Neither dare I side with those who averre that she is halfe of that sacrifice that ransom'd us, and Gods partner here.

here. Nor is my penne ſo impiouſly valiant as to juſtifie that God made himſelfe the patterne, and communicated to her by Grace whatſoever hee had by Nature. Nor am I of his bold opinion who ſayes, If man had never ſinned, yet Chriſt ſhould have taken fleſh to honour her. Theſe men would have her in all things equall to Chriſt himſelfe. Neither her modeſty, nor mine will admit of this blaſphemous flatterie. I willingly allow her to be the veſſell, but not the fountaine of Grace. I am much taken with his Tenent who holds that God made all things for the uſe of Man, becauſe he would amply furniſh him with matter enough to buſie his head, leſt he ſhould bee ſo audacious as to enquire into his ſecrets, & encroach upon his prerogatives. We need not

not (thanks to his infinite goodneſſe) bee ſo dangerouſly venturous, ſince he affords us a large ſcope, and ground enough ſafely to extol this his Favourite, ſecond to none that ever bore fleſh, either in her owne deſert, or his eſteeme.

To begin with her birth; it was miraculous, as it alwayes falls out where Nature failes, and God ſupplies, as he did here in *Anna* the bleſſed mother of this more bleſſed maid. And here by the way I muſt inſert an obſervation derived from Gods ſacred Word, that for the moſt part the children of ſterility are fruit-

Her Birth.

That Ioacimus *and* Anna *were her parents is an undoubted truth receiv'd by the Church, as wee find both in* Baronius *and Biſhop* Montacute *in his Booke called* Apparatus, &c.

fruitfull in ſanctity, and all good works. *Samſon* was the ſonne of barrenneſſe, and kept the people in obedience. So was *Iſaac*, and gave precepts to the ſeed of *Abraham*. So was *Samuel*, and foretold the miſery of ſervitude to the Iewiſh Synagogue. So was *Ioſeph*, and with his counſell govern'd all Ægypt. So was our hallow'd ſubject, who brought forth the Sonne of glory. The ſlaves of the *Tyrians* rebelling againſt their Maſters, and having ſubdu'd them by a generall conſent, decreed, that hee amongſt them who the next morning could firſt diſcover the Sunne riſing ſhould be their King. One of them of a more gentle diſpoſition then the reſt, having hidden his Maſter (by name *Strato*) from the others fury, ſecretly askt his adviſe in this ſo important affaire, who

who bade him look into the Weſt; for there he ſhould ſooner diſcern the approach of the Sunne then they who ſought him in the Eaſt. This wiſe counſell he obey'd, and while the reſt fixed all their eyes on the Eaſt, he from the higheſt part of the City, by his Rayes in the Weſt, firſt diſcover'd his aſcenſion in the Eaſt. So in *Anna* (the happy mother of this wonder of women) being then in the occident, or ſet of life the prophetick world foreſaw the brightneſſe of the dazeling light ſhe then teem'd with. At length the worlds greedy expectation was ſatisfied; and this Cynthia, this chaſt Starre was delivered of a Plannet farre greater, and brighter then her ſelfe; of whoſe all gladding ſhine the firſt man participated, and the laſt ſhal. I may as properly as dolefully call them

them Plannets, since they never rested, but were in perpetuall motion while in this lower orbe they ran their fatall courses, in which they were often clowded, never quite eclipsed. The day of the Nativity of this most perfect of Saints, I finde thus described by *Nicolaus Vernulæus* a late Writer, and a professor of eloquence. The description I onely insert for the elegancy; for I must condemn it as guilty of Levity and Vanity, and no way sutable to the Majesty, Gravity, and Modesty of this our sacred subject. *The Sunne, saith he, this day burnisht his face, the better to illustrate the world, and to appeare gracious in her sight; who carried in her breast a fire purer, and clearer than his owne Rayes. The earth put on her freshest greene, and the flowers spread their dainty leaves,*

and

and made a ſweet exchange of odours with her, yet hung their heads to ſee themſelves both in colour, and ſent ſo farre ſurpaſs'd. The trees advanc'd their curled heads, and compos'd their lookes within the Chriſtall ſtreames, who ſeemed to dance after their owne murmur. Amongſt the Beaſts their King layd by his fierceneſſe, and not one of his ſubiects was found ſavage, or polluted that day. Then was the Proverbe croſs'd; for the Worme being trod on, would not turne againe, leſt ſhe ſhould prove unlike her meekeſt Miſtreſſe. In the very bowels of the earth, the minerals and the ſtones more pretious, aſſumed their quicker ſparkes, as Emblems of her ſplendour. The Ocean had not a wrinckle in his face, thouſands of Halcions hover'd o're his head, and his Tritons blew ſo lowd, that their notes ſounded the very bottome of the Deep. Within his

his vaſt Dominions was no diſcord that day; for the greater of the fiſh forſooke their prey, and the ſmaller ſwumme in that ſecurity, that the Sprat bearded the Dolphin, and playd with the noſe of the overgrown Whale. The birds ſung their choiſeſt aires; the fowles flew nearer the earth to ſalute her, and their Towring Lord the Eagle brought his young ones to try their eyes at this new borne Light. The ayre it ſelfe was like her, gentle, and being inviſible, came to ſteale a kiſſe from her cherry lips, ſoft and ſmooth as were his owne. The windes (conceiving their ſilence would beſt pleaſe) kept themſelves within their dens; onely Zephirus *was let looſe to fanne the Pinke, and Violet, and play the wanton with the Roſe.* Thus farre *Vernulæus.* Of all things created man alone, to whom, being ſicke, ſhe was to bring a ſoveraine Anti-

Antidote was found leaſt joyfull, leaſt gratefull. Yet were there ſome, no doubt, of Gratitudes children, who lay proſtrate before her, and did homage to their ſweeteſt Lady, who might better be called the Mother of the living, then *Eve*; ſince ſhe, like a Murdreſſe, gave her children death ere birth; and defaced thoſe Images whereon God had ſet his owne ſtampe. She was no wiſer than a poor Fly, who, enamour'd of the beauty of the flame, longs to try if it be as ſweet as faire, and is conſumed with her owne folly. Had our bleſſed one ſupplied her roome in Paradice, the forbidden fruit had, perchance, beene yet untaſted, and man uncurſed; for ſhe was altogether void of curioſity, proper to that weaker ſexe, and

the very basis of it. Our dearest Princesse therefore was deservedly a Queene ere borne, receiv'd a Crowne sooner than sight, and found her Throne seated upon the threshold of life. And what Crowne was she presented with? Not one to compose which the East, and the West joyned their treasures, but a Crowne in the making whereof every vertue, and all the Graces had a hand. Nor did any vaine mortall place it on her sacred Temples, but God himselfe, who thought nothing too deare, nor omitted any ornament that might embellish this goodly edifice wherein himselfe meant to reside. Having thus adorn'd and honour'd her, he plac'd her in this lower world for the good and admiration of all,

for

for the converſation of a few. Though borne on earth ſhe lived here like a Native of Heaven.

Her infancy.

As we may gueſſe at the neatneſſe of a houſe by the entry into it: ſo we may judge of her lifes remainder by the very beginning. *Sabellicus* affirmes that * ſhe no ſooner ſaw the light, but ſhe ador'd the Creator of it, and lifted up her heart and eyes to the great Infuſer of all her incomparable excellencies. She lov'd God ere ſhe had ſeene man. The defect of her tongue could not hinder the operation of her ſoule, in which ere ſhe could ſpeake, ſhe acknowledg'd his unſpeakeable goodneſſe. In her Religion preceded the uſe of reaſon, and ſhe apprehended Gods mercies long ere

Sabellicus ſets downe how ſhee diſpos'd of every particular hour.

ſhe was capable of his nature, and wiſedome. Ere ſhe could utter holy words, ſhe made holy ſigns, by which ſhe made knowne the ſanctity of her heart. The firſt word ſhe learn'd to liſpe was *Iehovah*. She ſent forth many a ſigh for ſinne, not having committed any, and bewailed that of which ſhe was utterly ignorant. The rowling of the cradle put her in minde that ſhe was newly enter'd into the tempeſt of this life, the infinite dangers whereof to eſcape ſhe made Vertue her Pilot.

We will not here with ſome Writers of her Life, diſpute whether or no ſhe had the ſame ordinary Education with other children; nor with them affirme that ſhe entred the Temple at three yeares

yeares old, and lived close by the Altar, and was fed miraculously by an Angell; as also that it was there revealed to her that she should be deliver'd of the Messias. I will not make one steppe out of Gods own path, frō which I never yet saw the greatest wit to swerve, but it was in danger of sticking fast. Yet hath a pious charity often swallowed more than all this. If from the hand of an Angell she there received food naturall, or supernaturall, sure I am the wonder is not so great as that of the Incarnation, where the wombe included the Word. And why should we with difficulty beleeve that this white spotlesse soule was illuminated with Revelations by the divine object of her chaste vowes? who undoubtedly deserved to be

rapt up if it were possible, a story higher than was Saint *Paul*. It is likely enough, saith *Mantuan*, God would have the Temple of his Spirit to dwell in the Temple of his service. The same Author affirmes that she there liv'd a pretty Nun, and Spunne, and wove the sacred Vestments till her eleventh or twelfth yeare, when her prudency, and shame, and the care of her Reputation, forbade her to accompany even the very Priests themselves, men whom God had selected out of the Masse of the vulgar to teach his Will, to instruct his people, and to sing his praise. These curiosities, and bold conjectures let us rather beleeve then contest with the broachers; for it is wisedome to grant what we cannot confute. Let us then imagine

imagine that this holy Recluse confined her body to this sacred solitude, and a spare diet, and warily kept her soule from the infects to which carnall delights invite all things humane. And it is consonant both to reason and truth, that her exercise there, was pious like the place. They who goe about to take away her writing, and reading tongue are impiously ridiculous, since it evidently appeares that she was well read in the Scriptures by her divine Hymne uttered in *Zacharies* house.

* On her reading attended Meditation, on her Meditation Prayer, or her Prayer Action, as the lovely fruit of the precedent. Thus

* *Ancient and eminent Authors affirme her to have beene learned in the Hebrew tongue, all which you shall finde quoted in* Cedrenus.

busied, the day left her, the night found her. Her sleeping cogitations we may suppose were sutable to her waking, and her very dreames divine. She had not a thought that was her owne, all belong'd to God. She was slow to speake, saith *Sabellicus*, but ready to obey all holy advice. Her tongue was not so swift as her Wit, which made it follow for direction in all the requisites of speech. In a word, she might well usurpe that of the Church, *When I was a little one, I was pleasing to the most high.* When upon mature deliberation she left the Temple, she still liv'd as if she had beene in it: Though in body she was sociable, she fetter'd her soule from wandring abroad, her true conversation being in heaven. This

flourishing

flouriſhing Vine planted her ſelfe amongſt the Olives. She was more choice of her company then of her food, or rayment, both which, God knows, were courſe enough. She knew temperancy to be Gods, and Natures Favorite, in that it conduceth to the ſervice of the former, and the preſervation of the later. She therefore made this heavenly vertue judge of her Appetite, leſt it ſhould long after exceſſe, the mother of all uncleanneſſe. Her ſoule gave laws to her body, which it could not infringe without the injunction of a ſtrict pennance. She devour'd Gluttony it ſelfe, and made the fleſh ſubject to the command of the ſpirit. Her fare, ſaith *Cedrenus*, required no veſſell, nor need ſhe to waſh her hands after her greateſt meale. Her

dyet

dyet deride the fire, as of no use. From the Earths face, the Cows dugge, and the Fountains brimme, she readily fetched her sustinance. She was as ignorant of the Persian luxury, as the superstition. To this her cloathing was correspondent, for which her backe was beholding to her fingers. Her hands were the purveyours to her other members. She had one eye fixed on heaven, and the other cast upon the earth, being intentive on the Glories of the one, and the Necessities of the other, and at once acted *Martha*, and *Magdalene*. It is very credible that she sowed, and spunne, and maintain'd life with labour. Hee who gives life to all things, suffer'd his then adopted, and since naturall mother, to gaine her living with sweat, and care, that

that her example might give pride the checke, and teach Majesty Humility. In her he made manifest that mortall felicity is not the parent of the immortall. She was not solicitous for the feather, the looking-glasse, or any outward bravery, being onely carefull to cover her shame, and at once to expell two deadly enemies to her soule, and body, pride, and cold. Her outward simplicitie was in all things answerable to her inward.

Her betrothing.

Well, now she began to write woman, and her fifteenth yeare approached, and hand in hand with the increase of time went the acquisition of all Graces. Her least perfection would render another most accomplisht. In her all vertues were at strife, all overcame. Nothing

Nothing was here meane, ſhe being no other then an union of ſuperlatives. Charity, obedience, pietie, virginity, all were in her at height. Nothing in her was wanting but the Deity it ſelfe. Yet was not her vaine-glory ſuch, that ſhe deſired with *Dina* to viſit the daughters of other Regions, and to enlarge the renowne of theſe her Excellencies, being onely ſtudious in the government of her owne little, inward commonwealth. Her fixed reſolution was not onely to confine her perſon, but her fame, which (had it penetrated forreigne Countries) Kings would have come ſuppliants to her cottage, and on their knees have petition'd for her love. But the bonds of her Matrimony were already askt in heaven, and no impediment

pediment found why she might not wedde God himselfe. Yet at the earnest solicitation of the reverend Priests, saith *Mantuan*, was she content to be betroth'd to *Ioseph*; not that he should do the office of an husband, but serve as a barre to the importunity of other Sutours, that so she might the more freely enjoy the inconceiveable pleasure she tooke in her vowed virginity.

But

28. And the Angel came in vnto her, and said, Haile thou that art Highly fauoured the LORD is with thee, Blessed art thou Among women.

But now the time is come when he must be (to the astonishment of the world) a Mother, and yet remaine a Virgin. The marriage betweene God, and Nature is concluded on in heaven, and *Gabriel* the Ambassador concerning mans Redemption prepares himself for his journey decreed from all eternity. He receives instructions from the hands of Gods owne transcendent Mercy; and therefore, no doubt, but they are gentle, and pleasing. Clad in white, (as an emblem of his innocencie) he sets forth without any other guard then his owne right Arme able to destroy Legions. The *Chaldeans* carried in their Ensignes a towring flame, the Babilonians a Dove, the Scythians Lightning, the Persians

The salutation.

ſians a Bow, and Arrows, the Romans an Eagle. And this extraordinarie Ambaſſadour of peace, (being to deſcend from the higher to the lower world, from the Creatour to the creature, an Angell to men) beares along with him in his very name the ſigne of his Power, and Fortitude that ſends him. The gates, ſaith *Vernulæus*, of the celeſtiall pallace ſtand wide open, and the ſacred Trinity gladly beholds the departure of this divine Meſſenger. The Angels clap their wings, and make the heavenly roofe ring with Haleluiahs. The Saints attend, and ſend their vows after him, that his preſence may be without terrour, and his ſweet delivery win conſent in the heart of their glorious Empreſſe. The vaſte ſpace betweene the Poles is filled

filled with troopes of holy ſpirits, who give a convoy to this their fellow-ſervant graced above the reſt, in having ſo important an affaire as the worlds ſalvation committed to his charge. The Starres put on new, and brighter aſpects, as ſeeming to foretell what they foreſee not. The Earth bedeckt with all imaginable ornaments preſents him with variety of ſents, and colours even to her ſelfe new, and layes her prime dainties under his feet. Onely her ſtupid Inhabitants, whom his Embaſſie moſt concern'd, were altogether unſenſible of his arrivall, and of the eternall benefit he brings them, receiving him rather like an Herald then an Ambaſſadour. And (which encreaſed his wonder at his entertainment) his firſt approach was

of

unwelcome to the Saint whose Votary he was. He found her (as some think) alone, separated as well in body as minde from the world. She was not ignorant that piety was neater pollution in society than solitude, and therefore to shun infection, she avoyded company. She well knew that the holy Ghost himselfe had dwelt with the Prophets and Apostles in Caves, Dens, and Dungeons, and there pen'd the all-saving Writ. That which we call good fellowship, and sweet conversation her conscience assured her to be at best but a sociable folly. In neighbourhood she feared proximity in vice. Well, if alone he found her, questionlesse she made a divine use of that privacy, and meditated how in a corrupible body,

to

to preserve a spirit incorruptible. The celestiall agent having demanded, and obtained audience, spake the oration he made not; for he was but Interpreter of the holy Spirit, in which office he justly gloried. The speech assuredly was modest, and sutable to the sacred eares it was to enter. The beginning of it, no doubt, consisted of a reverent applause of the perfections God had imparted to her. *Haile Mary*, said he, *full of Grace, the Lord be with thee: blessed art thou amongst women, &c.* How she tooke this the Text following declares. *And when she saw him shee was troubled at his saying, and thought what manner of salutation that should be.* No doubt the Angell no sooner pronounc't, *Haile Mary full of Grace*, but a blush arose in her

bashfull face, and verified his words. But this colour was not fixed, it went quickly back to fortifie her noble heart against the feare that invaded it. She saw her selfe alone with one altogether a stranger to her, whose face she neither knew, nor his intent. True it is, his language was smooth, and even, but as faire words as these, have often proceeded from a foule heart. She trembled at his salutation, thinking him to be a * man

* *That the Angell appeared to her in the form or shape of a man is the opinion of* S. Hierome. in Epist. ad Eustoch. de cust. Virgin. *and of* S. Ambrose, lib. 1. offic. cap. 18. *And that which* Damascen *hath*, lib. 2. de fide ortbod. *All the learned approve of; to wit, that the Angels are transform'd, and appear to men according to the pleasure of the Lord, and reveale his divine Mysteries. And that Angels appear'd in the old Testament in the shape of men is certaine: and for many reasons it is very probable that* Gabriel *assumed the form of a man when he came to the blessed Virgin.* Chrysologus serm. 140. *is of opinion that the Angel appeard*

subject

in a ſhape, and habit moſt pleaſing and gentle, and that the Virgin was not troubled at his perſon, but his ſpeech, in that it is ſaid ſhee marvelled what ſayings thoſe ſhould be.

ſubject to abhorred Luſt, and therefore feared violence: but when ſhe once knew him, and his Embaſſy, ſhe then undaunted, diſcours'd with him as an Angell, whom before ſhe quak't at as a man. I conjure all modeſt ſoules that ſhall peruſe this paſſage by all things deare to them, to dwell long upon it, as worthily deſerving both their admiration, and imitation. Though ſhe received from him extreme and heavenly praiſes, yet ſhe was afraid, becauſe ſhe was alone. O Saviour of the World! Purity feares an Angell, ſhall not Impurity then ſuſpect a

man though in the ſhape of an Angell when his complement, and diſcourſe are ſenſuall. Virginity cannot bee too heedfull, which makes it practiſe the doubt of things ſafe, that ſo it may accuſtome it ſelfe to the feare of things dangerous. If heathen women have by nature ſo abhorred pollution, that they have choſen death before it, how odious muſt we judge it to the Angellicall innocency of Gods owne Mother? Well, what courſe tooke ſhe? She rejected theſe his commendations not with her tongue, but her lookes, which put on a diſlike of all he had ſaid. She had heard that when Caſtles come to a parley, it is a ſigne of yeelding, and therefore thought it her ſafeſt way to involve her ſelfe within humility,

and

and a ſober ſilence. But the Angell quickly delivered her out of this Agony into a greater; out of this feare into a more tormenting care. *Feare not* MARY, ſaith he, *for thou haſt found favour with God; for loe thou ſhalt conceive in thy wombe, and beare a ſonne, and ſhalt call his name* IESUS. *He ſhall be great, and ſhall be called the Sonne of the moſt high, and the Lord God ſhall give unto him the throne of his father* David. *And he ſhall raigne over the houſe of* Iacob *for ever, and of his Kingdome ſhall be no end.* To this her anſwer was, *How ſhall that be, ſince I know no man?* It is true, it is true, moſt bleſſed Virgin, thou knoweſt no man; but let thy modeſty reſt ſecure; for the operation of God, and not of man is here required. God ſhould never be con-

conceived in thee, wert thou not a Virgin, nor borne of thee ſhouldeſt thou not remaine ſuch. Thou canſt not be ſpotted with the conception, or birth of an iſſue ſo immaculate. This feare is as needleſſe as that of defiling thy faireſt fingers with the pureſt fountaine. If *Obededon* having received the Arke within his walles, was ſo enriched with all manner of Treaſure, that Felicity was voyced to have deſcended from heaven into his houſe; what ſhall we judge of thy ſupreme bliſſe, O glorious Virgin! who art not to be the receptacle of a wooden Arke, but of his only Sonne? With confidence therefore conſent to thy owne happineſſe, and the Redemption of all Humanity.

But,

But, indeed, I do not wonder at her aſtoniſhment, when I conſider her baſhfulneſſe. Mee thinks I ſee her now caſting her eyes up to heaven, now fixing them on the earth, and now againe on the Ambaſſadour himſelfe, reſolving to give up her ſoule rather then her virginity. Harſh muſt the word (conception) needs ſound to her who was a votary here to know man, whoſe onely love was prayer, whoſe onely childe was piety. But when the Angell urged Gods will, ſhe forthwith yeelded a handmaid to her Lords deſire. Let us intentively liſten to the text. *And the Angel anſwer'd, and ſaid unto her, The holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the power of the higheſt ſhall overſhadow thee; therefore alſo that holy thing that ſhall be borne of thee ſhall*

be called the Sonne of God. And behold thy cousen Elizabeth, shee hath also conceived a sonne in her old age, and this is the sixt moneth with her who was called barren. For with God nothing shall bee impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord, bee it to mee according to thy word. See here united an incomparable humility, and an obedience even unto death. For the consenting to be the mother of God was not easie to her, in that a meek, and humble spirit with greater difficultie ascends the highest steppe of Honours Throne, then a proud descends thence to the bottome, it being a thing in nature farre harder to climbe then to come downe. If any man shall yet rest unsatisfied, and shall make a further enquirie after this difficulty, he may please

to

to consider that her humility ballanc't her Sonnes exalted, and her owne dejected estate; and as well meditated the care, the diligency, the reverence, and obsequiousnes, as the dignity, and excellency of her whom God would vouchsafe the most glorious title of Mother. She wisely weighed that the Angels were not worthy to wait on him, and therefore the service of her whole life must as farre exceed, as the name of Gods Mother did excell that of Servant, or Angell. If Saint *Peter*, yet in the dawn of Grace, could so clearly discerne his Masters greatnesse, as that he cryed out, *Depart from me a sinner*, as deeming himselfe unworthy of his presence: If the Centurion for the same respect thought his house too base to receive him, what should

ſhould ſhe thinke who was not to take him into her ſhip, or her lodging, but into her wombe, where he was to remaine not a viſitant, but a dweller? Full well alſo ſhe underſtood that her conſent was not onely required to be the parent of the Almighty, but the Spouſe alſo of his holy Spirit, to whoſe inſpirations ſhe ought a greater obedience then others, having received from the ſame ſpirit a greater meaſure of grace, and honour. She clearly foreſaw that ſhe was not onely choſen to conceive the Son of God, to bring forth, to nurſe, and governe him, but alſo perforce to yeeld him up (ſuch being the divine pleaſure) to a three and thirty yeares perſecution, and laſtly to the curſed death of the croſſe, the ſalvation of others depending

Many ancient Writers hold that ſhe had the gift of prophecie.

pending on his destruction. And that she did foresee all this, plainly appeares by the speech of the Angell to her, who (after he had foretold the conception, and birth of Christ) added, *And he shall be called Iesus*, that is, a Saviour. An awfull reverence, and an inconceiveable joy divided, without doubt, her all-holy heart when she contemplated her future being a mother to the Messias. Can a man imagine any thing more difficult, more bitter for humane nature to overcome? Yet did her active vertue vanquish all these impediments, and with an humble, ravisht soule she expected the entrance of him into her sacred wombe, whom already she had surely seated in her heart.

Here

Here before we proceed to her conception, we muſt obſerve two things not amply, and fully enough expreſs'd, very remarkable in the Angelicall ſalutation; Firſt, the dignity of the Ambaſſadour, next the worth of her to whom his Embaſſy was directed, together with her many vertues equally eminent in this divine Dialogue.

Concerning the firſt; he was not a man, but an Angell; neither an Angell of an inferiour order, but of the ſupreme Hierarchy, which choiſe and pure ſpirits having received infinite ornaments and graces from their Lord and Maſter, retained ſtill his favour, and ever ſtood before him. S. *Gregory* ſtiles him a principall Angell, treating

Hom. 34 in lect. Evang.

of

of principall things. Some have not feared to call him the supreme Angell, as *Damascen*, and others. Truth will answer for him, that amongst all the celestiall spirits, none are so predicated in holy Writ as he, and *Michael*, to whom the Declaration, and Exposition of so high Mysteries so often were committed, as in *Daniel*, *Zachary*, and *Mary* is specified. Some will have his name to signifie God, and man, and that this Etymology containes a miraculous mystery. Amongst these is *Proclus* Arch-Bishop of *Constantinople*. Gebet, saith he, *signifies man*; El *God, alluding to his Embassy, which treated of his approaching birth, who was both God and man*. Saint *Bernard* judgeth the servant of *Abraham* to have beene a type of *Gabriel*; for he was sent

Serm. de Virginis assump.

In 1 cap. Luc.

In purvis. serm. Gen. 24.

ſent by his Maſter not to ſeek any Virgin that came next to hand, but ſuch a one as the Lord God had prepared for the Sonne of his Lord. *This* Gabriel, *ſaith Saint* Chryſoſtome, *the Painters preſent to us winged; not that God created him ſo, but to denote the ſublimmity, and agillity of the celeſtiall Nature, as alſo to admoniſh us that with grateful hearts wee acknowledge him to have for our cauſe deſcended from his higheſt habitation.* And ſweetly *Chryſologus*; *An Angell treated with* Mary *concerning our ſalvation, becauſe an Angell had dealt with* Eue *touching our damnation.* This bleſſed Spirit, and Saint *Iohn* the Evangeliſt, *Damianus* compares to two Lyons which carefully guard this our ſacred ſubject. I will not here ſeeke to ſatisfie the over-

Hom. de incomprehenſibili Dei natura.

Serm. 142.

Serm. 1. *de nat. Virgin.*

curious

curious, and needleſſe doubts of *Luther*, and others, whether ſhe knew *Gabriel* to be an Angell, or no; nor whether or no he entred her chamber the doore being ſhut, nor whether he appear'd to her in a gentle familiar ſhape, or in his full ſplendour, as when he ſo much amaz'd *Zachary*, and ſtrucke him dumbe. Theſe queſtions ſerve rather to buſie curioſitie, then enflame zeale. Neither hath all that tender ſexe (to whoſe good I dedicate this diſcourſe) received an education that renders them capeable Iudges of ſuch diſputes. And I freely acknowledge that in this Treatiſe I have not ſo much as uſed any one word not frequent, and familiar, becauſe I would make the ſenſe cleare to the Femal Readers. Withall I profeſſe my

ſcope is not to ſharpen their wits, but to beautifie their lives, and to kindle in their faire boſomes an holy ambition to aſpire to the perfections of that devout life, which this our incomparable Lady led, and ended with the applauſe of men, and Angels.

Laying aſide therefore theſe ſuperfluous arguments, I will proceed (as my method commands me) to deliver her ineſtimable worth, and ſober demeanour towards the Angell, which no eloquence can ſo well expreſſe as a ſilent, and reverent admiration. Much I need not ſay of her of whom I never can ſpeake enough, eſpecially having already produc'd ſo many ancient, and learned extollers of her excellencies, to

which

which my vote would adde no more then a dimme lampe to the glorious eye of heaven, or an obscure gloworme to a starry night. Yet since at the Altar of this meek one (sweet and chast as the Incense there daily burned) a single graine sent from a simple heart is acceptable, I will not feare to pay her a due oblation, though it come as short of her value, as I of her goodnesse. May it please thee then, pious Reader, gratefully, with me to acknowledge that this is she who gave flesh to him by whom all flesh is sav'd. This was the Dove that first brought to us the Olive of our peace. This is the Rainbow, or first signe of our reconciliation to the divine Majesty. And (to shut up all in a little) this was the Tabernacle, and Throne of the Al-

mighty, whence (his Majesty obscured) his love shined forth to all humanity. But in that a plaine delivery of her vertues adorne her more then can all the flowers of Rhetoricke; I will (though in an inelligant phrase) set such downe as shall appeare most eminent in this unparalell'd colloquy, wherein were handled the profound mysteries of the sacred Trinity, as of the Fathers omnipotency, the holy Ghosts efficacy, the Sonnes excellency, and in him the proprietie of both natures.

Her prudency. Her Prudency shall take the first place, not as the greatest, but as the most diffusive, because cleane through this Dialogue it blends with all the rest. First, she awfully, and advisedly gives him full audi-

ence, and at once both obſerves the laws of patience, and the cuſtome of good manners in quietly attending the period of his ſalutation. Many of her Sexe would have ſo cut him off at every word, that hee ſhould never have peec't his ſpeech together againe. Being more miſtreſſes of their tongues then their eares; they would never have given him hearing till they had beene weary of talking. One of theſe, *Iuvenal* makes mention of in his 6. Satyre, who made a din able to free the Moon from the power of the enchanter

The common ſort when the Moone was eclipſed thought her to be enchanted, and with baſons and other things made a hideous noyſe to barre her from hearing the charmers voyce.

This vertue of an opportune ſilence few women

obtain, if they do, it comes to them the laſt of all other. Their tongues are clocks which, once wound up, few of them go leſſe then ſixteene houres. But this wiſeſt of Saints in a ſeaſonable ſilence, and caution of ſpeech, was alike admirable: Inſo much that through the whole Bible we finde not that ſhe ſpake above five times. Twice to the Angell *Gabriel*, as *How ſhall this be* and againe, *Behold the Hand-maid of the Lord.* Next in the encounter betweene her, and her couſen *Elizabeth.* A fourth time to her beloved Sonne after long abſence, *Why have you dealt ſo with us.* Laſtly, when ſhe becomes a petitioner for the poore, *Becauſe they have no wine.* Here in this place ſhe intentively hearkens to the Angell, whom ſhe heares twice ere ſhe replyes

Her opportune ſilence and caution of ſpeech.

plyes once. She made two pawſes uſher her anſwer, which ſhe fram'd with ſuch care, and ſobriety, as if Modeſty had ſeal'd up her boſome, and lippes, and that without her ſpeciall warrant they were not to be opened. And though her thoughts were perplex'd and troubled, yet ſhe apparrell'd them in ſuch a cleare, ſmooth calme of language, that it would have gentiliz'd Barbariſme it ſelfe. When her Chaſtitie is call'd in queſtion (which ſhe eſteemes above health, liberty, or life it ſelfe) ſhe poſitively denies nothing in that ſtrange, and to her impoſſible aſſertion of the Angell, but anſwers with an humble enquirie, *How ſhall that be?* Well might ſhe make this demand, ſince ſhe knew by humane power it could not be effected; and the

Angell had not yet revealed, that ſuch was the divine will. Though never ſoule endured a greater conflict then hers, and that Feare had ſtretched the ſtrings of her heart to their utmoſt extenſion, yet choſe ſhe rather that they ſhould breake in ſunder, than ſhe into Intemperancy. Some women (though chaſt, yet curſt, and haſty) having once heard their chaſtity brought in queſtion, would have omitted all interrogations, and have given the Angell a Sermon for his ſalutation, and have reviled his name, if not offered violence to his perſon. But in this ſweeteſt of creatures, mildeneſſe and modeſty kiſſed each other; ſo that nothing could flow from her that was not pleaſing and gentle. Yet could not her amazed lookes

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conceale her feare, which afflicts farre more than griefe; for we grieve onely for what is past, but we feare all that can happen. The mercifull Angell reading in her forehead the perplexity of her minde, resolved presently to ridde her of the tormenting doubt she was in; and to banish Feare out of that Face reserved only for Beauty, and the Graces to dwell in. He therefore hides this great secret no longer from her, but expounds to her the manner and meanes of her conception, which no sooner entred her eares, then consent her heart; and with a prostrate soule she made her will conform it selfe to Gods; *Behold, saith she, the handmaid of the Lord, &c.* In this consent of hers we may discover almost as many perfections as words

words. Some draw hence an observation, that the ſalvation of mankinde depended upon her conſent, and conſequently the damnation upon her refuſall. My meditation dares not climbe ſo high, not being able to conceive how poſſibly the ſearcher of hearts ſhould receive a repulſe from his choſen one, nor how his omnipotency can be confined to one onely meanes in the Redemption of mankinde. It ſhall ſuffice me to derive hence three of the greateſt Chriſtian Vertues, her Faith, her Obedience, her Humility.

Her Faith.

Faith is the hand whereby we lay hold on Chriſt, and his Merits, without which, ſaith S. *Auſtin*, all morall vertues whatſoever are

no

no better than gorgious sins. The dignity and necessity of this supernaturall gift cannot but evidently appeare to the meanest understanding, in that no man is ignorant that without Christ we cannot be sav'd, and without Faith we cannot apprehend Christ, nor apply his deserts, and passion to our polluted soules. In this which excells all other perfections did this happy Mother of our *Emanuell* surpasse all other creatures, as here in briefe, and hereafter more at large I shall demonstrate. S. *Austin* both in knowledge and authority infinitely exceeds me, and therfore I desire you would heare him for me. *Strengthened by a singular Faith, saith he, she made Gods Sonne hers, more happy truely in conceiving Christ in her minde, then his flesh*

Lib de sanct. Virg. cap. 3.

flesh in her wombe. Endued with this faith she fear'd, and reverenc'd him whom she bore, whom as soone as she brought forth she ador'd, and was the first beholder of the glory of his resurrection. Would I mutter up my forces I could produce many other Champions of the same worth and antiquity, that with an indefatigable zeale, doe vindicate the faith of this blessed Virgin against some of these latter ages, who accuse her as defective in that wherin she was most accomplisht. Their objections have beene long since answer'd by Saint *Austin*, Saint *Ambrose*, and divers others of those Primitive times. Saint *Austin* distinguisheth thus betweene *Zacharies* demand and hers. *Zachary when he sayes, Whence shall I know this? or, By what meanes shall I know*

Lib. 16. de civit. cap. 24.

know this, I, and my wife being so aged? he spoke this out of dspaire, not by the way of inquisition. But Mary *when she askes; How shall that be, since I know no man? shee utter'd this enquiring, not despairing. Wherefore to* Zachary *it is said, thou shalt be dumbe because thou believest not; but to her the cause is expounded, because while she doth question, she doubteth not of the promise.* And to the same purpose, and almost in the same words speakes Saint *Ambrose*, whose testimony I omit, lest I should prove tedious, and obscure to the tender sexe, to whose profit this weake Essay of mine is chiefly intended. Yet my zeale to her whose true admirer I am, compels me briefly to deface all those aspertions, which the adversaries to her, and piety have layd

layd upon her. And I am wholly transform'd into wonder as oft as I consider how malice, and hot ſpawne can bee ſo frontleſſe as groſſely to deprave the meaning of the Text onely to detract from her, and ſhould be ſo audacious as to contradict the holy Ghoſt himſelfe, who by the mouth of *Elizabeth* pronounceth her bleſſed, becauſe ſhe beleeved. True it is, their expoſitions give a light to the Scriptures, but it is ſuch a one as we receive from lightning, which brings with it rather terrour then comfort.

Her obedience.

Here her obedience calls upon me to cut off, I cannot ſay, this digreſſion, but vindication of her honour. Though ſhe deſerved ſoveraignty, and command, yet delighted

ed she in nothing more then in this submissive vertue proper onely to a Subject, and was a diligent practitioner of it through her whole life in imitation of him who was obedient even to an ignominious death. Her faith, and obedience were of equall speed; for she no sooner heard the Angell relate that the Almighty had ordained she should beare the worlds Redeemer, but she beleev'd, and consented that it should be so. She had learnt in her infancy, that obedience with God is better then sacrifice, and therefore she was as swift as thought in agreeing to the divine ordinance, that so posteritie might distinguish betweene her obedience, and that of others whose Wils, and Vnderstandings have a combat before they can bee brought

brought to a consent. But this was onely a lovely branch of that beautifull tree, her humility, on which a perpetual Autumne attended; for it continually bore fruit.

Her humility.

Of this Vertue I must treat more at large then of the rest, because it is extensive cleane through all the actions of her life. Of this there are many sorts, whose severall countenances, and shapes we will here draw to the life, lest the Reader be impos'd upon, and verily beleeve he enioyes the true one, when, indeed, he is onely possessour of the adulterate.

Natural humility

We will begin with the Naturall Humility, which is to be found in many, who being basely borne, and bred, and poorely spirited, aspire not

not to greatneſſe, but reſt fully contented with that ſordid calling Fortune hath allotted them. This Humility is none of thoſe that vertue doth warrant. There is another kinde which we may call ſenſuall, and this makes men refuſe honours, not that they do not deſire them, but for the trouble, care, and danger that attend them. This Humility is baſe, and degenerate. There is a third proud one of the Hypocrite, who though he be ambitious of dignities, and ſeeks them by all cunning, and undermining wayes, yet (to be reputed humble) he ſeemes to flie them. This Humility is falſe, and fained. A fourth there is philoſophicall, and morall, and this conſiſts in the knowledge of a mans ſelfe, and his miſerable condition, ſo that by a naturall

Senſuall humility

Hypocriticall humility

Philoſophicall humility

light he can see to humble himselfe, and be serviceable to all men, yet no further then the dignitie of his estate allows, and humane reason requires. So that in this mans opinion it should not be humility, but baseneſſe in a Gentleman to pardon an injury done him, or to place himselfe in an Hospitall as a servant to attend the sicke, and needy. This Humility will not endure the Christian Test. A fifth Mosaicall, or Iudaicall, offers it selfe to our consideration; and this hath a neare resemblance of the true one; for by the perusall of the written Law we come to know our selves more perfectly then all the Philosophers of the world can teach us. To this purpose Saint *Paul* saith; *From the Law comes the knowledge of sinne*; and in another place,

Mosaicall, or Iudaicall Humility.

place, *I had not knowne concupiſcence to bee a ſinne had not the Law ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet.* In this Mirrour we diſcerne our originall corruption, and all our diſordinate paſſions, and affections, together with our ignorance, and frailty. By this Touchſtone we finde all our moral philoſophical vertues to be but counterfeit. But this carries with it a very detrimentall diſcommoditie; for it leads us beyond hope of ſalvation, and there leaves us. For when a man ſhall conſider that an unattainable perfection, and an exact obſervance of the Law is required at his hands (wherein he is commanded to honour God with all his ſoul, and with all his might, and to love his neighbour as himſelfe) and yet withall ſhall diſcover in himſelfe an utter diſabilitie

to execute these holy commands, a frozen direction wil so benumme all his thoughts that not one of them will be of force to uphold it selfe from sinking into the bottomlesse pit of despaire.

The true Christian Humilitie.

But with the true Christian Humilitie it is otherwise which (having first made a submissive acknowledgement of its owne ingratitude, pride, avarice, injustice, impietie, and infinite other imperfections) by a strong apprehension layes hold on the mercie of God in Christ. And this goodnesse of God towards us makes our sinnes more odious even in our own eies; no otherwise then the tender kindnesse of his Father made the prodigall childe more clearly see his owne errour, and disobedience. For this

this makes that ſpeech of God to the Iewes, *When you come into the Land of promiſe, then you ſhall know your ſinnes:* as if he ſhould have ſaid, *How often have you diſtruſted me, and not onely murmur'd againſt me, but abandon'd me, and ador'd Idols, making them your guides, and attributing to them the benefits you have received from me?* ſo the regenerated Chriſtian being once entred into the ſpirituall Kingdome of Chriſt, ſees more clearely his ſinnes, then he did before his calling, as having received a greater Light. The excellency of this vertue in a Chriſtian is beyond humane expreſſion. Not amiſſe a learned Father of the Church ſtiles this the Treaſurer of all other vertues. The antient Chriſtians commonly uſurpe Hu-

Hieron. in Epiſt. ad Celant.

mility for vertue it ſelfe. Chriſt cals it pooreneſſe of Spirit, and diſcourſing of mans Beatitude, ſets it in the Front. This and Pride are at endleſſe oddes; for this is ſociable, and loves company, wheras pride affects ſolitude, and is for the moſt part alone. In the Empire of Pride, two cannot ſtand quietly together, whereas in the dominions of Humility, an infinite number may be placed without either combat, or ſtrife. Pride is never void of feare, and doubt, whereas this ſtands ſecure with *Ionas* in the bottome of the Sea. Pride is ever ambitious of the firſt ſeate, this of the loweſt, and therefore is as much extoll'd by all men, as the other cride downe. Pride aſſumes all to it ſelfe, and is full of ſelfe-love. This refuſeth

even

even its owne due, and undervalues it ſelfe, as knowing that it can juſtly call nothing its owne, but ſinne. Pride ſtormes at an injury receiv'd; this embraceth all occaſions that may exerciſe its patience. Pride (like all things puft up, and light) is wavering, and blown here and there by every guſt of Fortune; this in ſtability is a rock, not in hardneſſe, being ſoft, and white as the Downe of Swans. Yet though this Vertue be of all other the moſt innocent, and ſubmiſſive, it is withall the moſt powerfull; for, as nature, ſo God abhors vacuity, and therefore (finding the humble utterly empty of affectation, preſumption, and what elſe is derogatory to his honour) hee fils him with his grace and ſpirit. What ſhould I

ſay more? Humility is feareleſſe in danger, free in bondage, rich in poverty, quiet in perſecution, noble, and gloriorious in ignominy, lofty in lowneſſe, joyfull in anguiſh, and happy in the midſt of miſery. This made *Moſes* ſpeechleſſe, *Abraham* to acknowledge himſelfe duſt and aſhes, *Iohn* the Baptiſt to eſteeme himſelfe a meer Voyce, and Saint *Paul* to account himſelfe the greateſt of all ſinners. This Iewell was ſo faire in Chriſts eye, that to purchaſe it, he underwent not only poverty, miſery, and all indignities, but even execration, and malediction. What would we judge of a great Prince, who, in ſtead of enlarging his Territories, ſhould abaſe himſelfe ſo farre as to become a poore ſubject? Why this did Chriſt, who (being

of

of all things the greateſt, and beſt from all eternity) by humility became of all the loweſt, and deſcended even to the profeſſion of ſervice to the meaneſt of his creatures. It is alſo an evident marke of his humility, that he choſe to be borne of ſimple and obſcure Parents, whereas he might, if he would, have allyed himſelfe to the greateſt Princes. This gave occaſion to the Iewes to mocke him, ſaying, *Is not* Ioſeph *his Father, and* Mary *his Mother?* True it is that he was of the Houſe of *David*, but when he was borne, it was in its declination, and of no repute. As the Moone fourteene dayes together, to our ſight, encreaſeth, and fourteene againe diminiſheth, till at length it be ſeene no more: ſo in the fourteene generations

rations from *Abraham* to *David*, the Houſe of *David* received advancement in honour, and ſplendour, and was in his time at the full height; but in the fourteene following generations it was in the wane, and in the dayes of Chriſt neere utter extinction. And whereas he might have inſerted *Sarah*, *Rebecca*, and many other Saints in his Genealogy, he placed *Tamar*, *Raab*, *Ruth*, *Berſabe*, and others of an inceſtuous race, to ſhew the world, that, though he hated ſinne, he abhorred not ſinners. What man is there who, having a laſcivious wife detected of whoredome will take her againe? Yet Chriſt, having eſpouſed the adulterate ſoule of man, receives her into grace and favour after ſhe hath committed millions of adulteries.

teries. To this effect ſaith the Prophet, *Though thou haſt committed fornication with many Lovers, yet returne, and I will receive thee.* Who is there that being injur'd will not onely forgive the Offendor, but ſeeke his friendſhip, I, and lay downe his life for him? All this did Chriſt, who (being grievouſly and hainouſly abuſed by man) not onely demanded his pardon, as if he himſelfe had beene faulty, but made an oblation of his owne heart-bloud to quench the wrath of God juſtly conceived againſt him. Another admirable act of his humility was, that (God having given him all power in heaven and earth, in ſo much that he could at his pleaſure have deſtroyed *Iudas*, whoſe treaſon he foreknew) all the revenge he tooke,

was

was to wash his feet, and to call him Friend when he came to apprehend him. To these I may adde his living in obscurity from his twelfth to his thirtieth yeere, in all which time we reade not any thing of him. I will conclude with all the crosses and calamities he endur'd, of which in his life he never reaped any fruit, and at his death had his Innocency onely predicated by one, and that one a Thiefe. In a word, during his abode here below (whether you consider his Doctrine, Actions, or Passion) he was not so much delighted with the exercise of any vertue, as of this gentle, meek one, that so he might imprint it as his owne sacred stampe, or marke in those mindes which he would have known to be his. And, above the

the reſt, into the chaſt boſome of his deareſt Mother did he ſend this divine gift, before his birth by infuſion, and afterwards engrafted it there by example. And this we may well perceive by her ſo cloſely following the patterne that ſhe precedes all but himſelfe in this milde, offenceleſſe vertue. In this rare quality as ſhe had an unequall'd Maſter, ſo ſhe prov'd a matchleſſe Schollar. He who is ignorant of the excellency ſhe hath attain'd to in this one perfection, I dare pronounce him withall ignorant of Gods holy Writ, and incapeable of all goodneſſe derived thence. Yet ſome ſacrilegious theeves there are, who robbe this beautifull Temple of its prime ornament, this ſweeteſt Garland of its faireſt Flower. They maintaine (me

Her humility.

(me thinks the earth ſhould ſhake it ſelfe, and them when they utter it) that ſhe was humbled, not humble. Theſe I may more properly averre to be learning, not learned. They may with as much juſtice deprive the Roſe of her bluſh, the Lilly of her white, the Violet of her purple, and the Chriſtall of its clearneſſe, as her of this pretious ornament, which ſhe obtein'd by a ſtudious pious imitation, and preſerv'd with a holy care. But my wonder is the leſſe when I contemplate the continuall Antipathy betweene Impudency, and Innocencie. Whoſoever ſhall ſettle his meditation on her diſcourſe with the Angell, her pilgrimage to her couſens houſe, and her divine Hymne there (though he have ſworn himſelfe the ſlave of prejudice) he will

breake

breake his chaine, and reaſſume ſo much freedome as to declare her truly humble. Sure I am if they would have her halfe a degree humbler, they make her wholly abject. To my thinking theſe ſixe words alone (Behold the handmaid of the Lord) are able to convince of errour ſix thouſand ſuch ſhallow Authors. To thoſe who are plac'd in an extreame height, all things below ſeeme farre ſmaller then indeed, they are, but to themſelues they appeare the ſame; but here it fals out otherwiſe, where the introducer of one pregnant bleſſing that contein'd all other into the world (and therefore worthily placed above it) thinks all things under her farre greater then her ſelfe, and above her in value. Certainly all the ancient Fathers

with

with one consent affirme that she deserv'd to be Empresse of all others, who humbled her selfe below them all. For my owne part, I am so transported with the meditation of her meeknesse that me thinks I heare her thus expressing the humility of her sanctified heart to the heavenly Nuntio.

Is this a delightfull dreame, or a pleasing vision that thus raviſheth my soule? What a lovely prospect is this? What do mine eyes behold? Cedars stooping to shrubs? Mountains to vallies? The Ocean courting a Riveret? I discover more then all this. I see Heaven descending to Earth, the supreame Majesty to humane misery, a blessed Angell to a wretched mortall. True it is I am the structure of Gods owne hands, but an edifice not cleare,

not

not faire enough for the habitation of his onely Sonne. Alas, alas! I am a veſſel too unclean to encloſe a Deity: Is this fleſh of mine pure enough to clothe purity it ſelfe? I am not worthy to be reputed his childe, much leſſe his parent. Oh lend me thy harmonious voyce, thy heavenly Rhetoritke, thou celeſtiall Orator, that I may render him thanks, and praiſe; though not equall, yet nearer to the grace I have received. I deny not but wee ſee his Name written in every thing here below, but in obſcure Characters, like the diſcovery of the Sunne in a puddle. Thou art nearer him in eſſence, in preſence, in goodnes, in knowledge, and canſt finde out words more ſuteable to his worth. Wherefore I earneſtly beſeech thee in thy beſt phraſe to preſent the unfained gratitude of his moſt humble Hand-maid, who eſteems

her ſelfe unworthy to touch, much more to conceive him. Neither ſhalt thou thy ſelfe depart without moſt humble thanks for the eternall honour thou haſt done me by this viſit.

It is probable enough ſhe ſaid much to this purpoſe, this forme of ſpeech being agreeable to her diſpoſition, and demeanour. To conclude this point, ſix cleare demonſtrations of her Humility eminent above the reſt, the holy Writ offers to our ſerious, and reverend conſideration. The firſt in this ſubmiſſive conference with the Angel. The ſecond in the houſe of *Zachary*, where the more her vertue is predicated by her couſen, the more ſhe humbles her ſelfe. The third in her delivery, where ſhe meekly ſubmitted her

ſelfe

selfe to all wants, and inconveniences. The fourth in her Purification, when she observ'd the customs of other uncleane sinfull women, and rankt her selfe with them. The fifth in betrothing her selfe to a Carpenter, and in paying as great an obedience to him as ever woman did to husband, and in joyning with him in labour to get a poore living, to maintaine themselues, and their Sonne. The sixth in having a care of the poore, and in associating them at all times. But of all those I shall treate more at large in the course of this divine story, whose order now brings me to the mysticall conception of her blessed Sonne, our onely Lord, and Saviour Iesus Christ.

The heavenly Ambassadour ha-

Her conception.

ving executed his great Masters command, departs, leaves God, and Man in the wombe, and the Sonne of Righteousnesse is now risen in the virginall orbe. For this is the* tenent of the true, and ancient Catholicke Church, that she conceiv'd immediately after the Angels speech, whom I had rather follow, then accompany many of these later times who oppose it. I will onely produce a few testimonies, and that of *Gregory* the great shall be the Leader. *The Angell*, saith he, *declaring, and the Spirit approaching, instantly the Word is in the wombe, and presently in the wombe the Word is made flesh, the incommutable essence coeternall to him with the Father, and the holy Ghost still remaining*. Him secondeth Saint *Austin*, of all the Fathers the most subtle,

**This point is much cõtroverted, and I leave it to the discreete Reader what to beleeve.*

Lib. 18. Moral. ca. 27.

De Symbol. ad Catechum.

ſubtle and ſollid. Theſe enſuing are his owne words. *When the Angell ſaluted the Virgin, then did the holy Ghoſt make her fruitfull, then did that woman conceive a man without a man, then was ſhee repleniſht with grace, then ſhee receiv'd the Lord, that hee might be in her who made her.* And in another place he writeth thus. *Make no delay, O Virgin, ſay but the word ſpeedily to the Meſſenger, and receive thy Sonne, give thy Faith, and feele the vertue of it. Behold, ſaith ſhe, the Handmaid of the Lord, be it to me according to thy word. Here was no delay at all, the divine Agent returneth, and Chriſt enters the Virgin all wombe. The mother of God is ſuddenly made fruitfull, and is predicated happy throughout all ages. She preſently conceived the Divinity of the Word without the* Serm. 2. infeſto Annun. Domin.

fellowship of a man. In this celebration of the Nuptials between God and nature, while my affection advanceth one steppe, my reverence retires another. Here Reason is transformed into Admiration, Eloquence into silence. Some are rather solicitous to search into the profundity of the Mystery, than humbly to acknowledge it, and by Reason seeke to pry into that which excludes all reason. What was before time it selfe, is believed, not comprehended by man; for that transcends the understanding of man which was before his nature. No eyes but those of Faith, can penetrate this Wonder. All things in God are above reason, nothing above Faith. Here a Virgin conceives without the losse of Chastity, a Maide

This conception was predestinated before Time, from all eternity.

Maide remaines an immaculate Mother. Eternity is here encompass'd by time, glory masked in misery. A thing finite containes Infinity, a mortall encloseth eternity. Here the Sonne is as ancient as his Father, elder than his Mother, and is made of her whom he made. Here is a concurrence, or a congregation of Miracles. It is a miracle that in the forming of such, and so great an issue the aide of man should be utterly excluded, and that as he was man, he was onely made of the pure bloud of the Virgin. It is a miracle that the ordinary number of dayes required in the forming of a humane body is not here observ'd, but in a very moment without succession of time a body is fram'd, and animated. But a greater miracle than

all theſe is that at the ſame inſtant wherein the ſoule is joyned to the body, the Divinity and Humanity are united in one perſon, and the eternall Word is inſeperably linkt with the fleſh; ſo that the Son of God and man is the ſame in the Virgins wombe. As for the manner of her conception, I doe not more mervaile at the ſupernatural ſtrangeneſſe of it, then I doe at the daring inquiſition, and ſenſuall expreſſion of ſome, who relate it in words as groſſe as their owne underſtandings, I only wiſh I could free the moſt learned, and ingenious *Eraſmus* from the juſt imputation of a laſcivious folly in the Eſſaying to unfold this ſacred Myſtery. He compares God to a Woer, the Angell to a ſollicitour, and *Mary* to the beloved; and proceeds

ceeds further than either the divine Will, or humane modeſty permit. He treates of this venerable, this ſtupendious encounter betweene the Divinity and Humanity in the ſame amorous phraſe with which the Poets deſcribe the wanton meeting of *Dido* and *Æneas* in the Cave. I will not rip up the particulars in which he is faulty this way, leſt I runne into the ſame errour which in him I reprehend, and imprint a bluſh on the cheekes of my baſhfull Readers. This conception was as ſpotleſſe, and as cleare from all pollution as is a ſweet Odour when it enters the ſenſe. *Here, ſaith Saint* Auſtin, *the Word is the Husband, the Eare the Wife, in this glorious ſplendour is the Sonne of God conceiv'd, in this purity generated.* Of the ſame cleare,

Eraſ. in Annotat. Lei in Appendice ad Antapologiam Sutoris.

Serm. 11. in natal. Domini.

Lib. 1 de operib. spiritus sancti. cap. 9.

cleare, and cleane sense is *Rupertus* on this very passage. *When the true by believing Maide*, saith he, *opening at once her minde and mouth said, Behold the Handmaid of the Lord, be it to me according to thy Word; in the very instant (to make good the words of the Angell) the holy Ghost came upon her, and enter'd through the open dores of her Faith. What part did he enter? first the Chappell of her chaste bosome, then the Temple of her holy and incorrupt wombe: Her bosom, that she might be made a Prophetesse, her wombe, that shee might become a mother.* Now for the time of this conception, whether or no it were precisely on the 25. day of March, I will not strive to chaine any mans beleefe to a resolution herein, though I finde many old and great Doctors of the Church to have

have held it for a truth. Many questions here arise which I have neither time, nor desire to discusse. I will onely looke into the deportment of this incomparable creature after that she knew she was become the receptacle of a Deity. The meere apprehension of such an unheard of honour in other women, would have begotten pride, arrogancy, and disdaine, not onely of all their sexe, but of mankinde it selfe. They would have repin'd at their breathing of common ayre, and (scorning the earth they trod on) have nourisht an ambition to walke on the battlements of heaven. But this Maide above imagination excellent, the more she was grac'd and dignified, the more she was humbled. When all men admir'd, and even

even ador'd her, and judg'd her worthy to be presently assumed into heaven, she was ready to creepe into the center of the earth, and there to hide her, thinking that every one pointed at her, as undeserving that supreme dignity confer'd on her by God himselfe. And whereas others would have studied nothing but rich Tissues, and embroyderies to weare, and the most costly Persian Carpets to tread on, she meditated simplicity in apparell, and a good paire of shooes to beare her afoot journey over the steepe and flinty mountaines, intending to bestow a Visit on her cousin *Elizabeth*.

Many

39. And Mary arose in thase dayes, and went into the Hill Country &
40. And entred into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth.
41. And it came to passe, that when Elizabeth heard ỹ salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her wombe.

Her visitation. Many of her kinde, and in her high eſtate, and condition would hardly have acknowledg'd, or receiv'd their kindred, much leſſe have trotted over hils, and dales, to make a tender of their duties to them. Here is a rare ſpectacle, Humility climing, a thing as contrary to the nature of it, as it is to things ponderous of themſelues to flie, This ſoveraigne of her ſexe having the celeſtiall Monarch included in the narrow compaſſe of her wombe, made haſte to paſſe thoſe ſteep, ſtony, and rugged hils, the willingneſſe of her minde enabling the feeblenes of her body. And, to ſay the truth, whether ſhould ſhe (whoſe worth exalted her above all things elſe) go but to places as eminent in ſcituation

as ſhe in ſweetneſſe of diſpoſition? Whither ſhould this Eagle flie, but to the ſummity of the worlde? Sure I am ſhe could not ſore above the pitch of her owne value. Shee forſooke the ſweet embelliſht valies, where with eaſe ſhe might have walked, and betooke her ſelfe to the craggy mountaines, which not without infinite labour, and paine ſhe could aſcend. By theſe rough, and uneven wayes, have the holy Martyrs themſelues mounted the promontory of vertue, and have found the end of their journey as ſweet as their travell bitter. *O vertue the minds that travell to thy Indies how rich they returne! They come backe laden with thoſe pretious ornaments that beautifie this life, and thoſe Panchayan odours that ſweeten the deprivation of it, and perfume poſterity.*

ſterity. True it is that thy ſeas a
rough, & to him that lancheth into th
deepe, appeare at firſt terrible, but
with confidence & conſtancy he plow
them up, and with a fixed patience en
dures the frownes of an angry skie, h
ſhall at length diſcover a calm
ſmooth as thy owne forehead, on whic
Fortune, Time, and vice could neve
get imprint one wrinckle. Vnder th
ſacred ſafe conduct hath many a ſu
perſtitiouſly devout diſtreſſed fema
pilgrim (after the endurance of hea
and cold without, of hunger, and thir
within, and other miſerable accident
innumerable) arrived with comfo
at the ſuppoſed ſhrine of this our bleſ
ſed Saint, who here (having no othe
guard than thy potent ſelfe) expoſe
her dainty feet to the knowne cruelt
of flints hard, and ſharpe alike, an
her ſacred perſon to labour, and inf
nite

nite hazards incident to the poore Traveller. She who meriteth to ſit under a cloth of ſtate, beſet with the earths moſt precious ſtones, and a preſence throng'd with Empreſſes, as happy waiters graced in this attendance doth here commit her ſelf into the hands of ſolitude, and danger. Thus did the Spouſe of the holy Spirit overcome the narrow, and difficult paths of theſe ſteepe mountaines, Charity leading her by one hand, and Humility by the other. And if we diligently peruſe Gods ſacred Word, we ſhall there finde the Mountaines honour'd with many notable acts. Where did that parent of an innumerable iſſue, *Abraham*, prepare the immolation of his only ſonne? On a mountaine. Where did *Moſes* receive the Tables of the divine

Law? On a mountaine. Where did Christ, (his Humanity concealed) transfigure his face into a countenance of eternall glory? On a mountaine. Where did he shed his pureſt bloud, and lay downe his deareſt life as an expiation for our hainous and manifold ſinnes? On a mountaine. But why theſe famous Acts were performed on mountains rather then in vallies, Reaſon hath not a ſight ſtrong, and quicke enough to diſcover. But this is evident, that God hath not plac'd Heaven it ſelfe on the one ſide of us, or under our feet, but over our heads, that we might direct our looks, and fixe them on his eternall habitation, and aſpire to enter the celeſtiall Canaan; indeed our true country, out of which while we live, we leade but a dying,

ing, and a ſlaviſh life, and are no other then unfortunate exiles. And ſurely the very ſight of ſublime places breeds in us high thoughts. We commonly looke downe on things deſpicable, the eyes of admiration are bent upward.

The cauſe why ſhe tooke this journey, I ſhall endeavour to relate ſo briefly, that I will ſtrive to avoid even long ſyllables. Yet do ſo many pious doctrines, and uſes, flow from theſe two Chriſtalline ſprings, that they alone are ſufficient to compoſe an entire booke of a vaſt volume.

The Angell that he might beget, and ſtrengthen a beleefe in *Mary* of what he had ſaid confirms this miracle with another, and tels

her that her Couſen *Elizabeth* alſo in her old declining age had conceiv'd a ſonne, and that this was now the ſixth moneth of her being quicke. Theſe glad tydings, no doubt, delighted much our bleſſed Ladies minde, where they could not ſtay without rendring a faire encreaſe of fruit, firſt in meditation, then in action. Queſtionleſſe, ſhe no ſooner heard them but her ſoul was delivered of a twinne of vows; the firſt was, to praiſe God, that he out of his beſt pleaſure, and infinite goodneſſe had vouchſafed to crowne her couſens fruitfull vertue with the bleſſing of a childe, ſhe being now in yeares, when deſpaire had chaſed all ſuch hopes out of her breaſt, and barrenneſſe (as the world conceiv'd) had ſeal'd up her wombe. The other

other was, all impediments ſet apart, to give her couſin a viſit in her owne Country, and habitation. Having performed the firſt, her thankeſgiving for her, ſhe undertakes the latter, her journey to her. Nor was ſhe long about it, but with all ſpeed poſſible ſet forward, leſt ſhe might ſeeme not readily to obey the incitation of the holy Ghoſt, or be wanting to her couſin in any good office ſhee could doe her. Neither could the conſideration of her owne Majeſty, of the teeming eſtate ſhe was in, of the diſaſters to which Travellers are ſubject, of the unevenneſſe of the way, or of the * length (which *Melanchthon* affirms to have beene twenty Dutch miles) deter

In concione de viſitat. Mariæ.

* *From* Nazareth *to* Ieruſalem, *where that* Elizabeth *dwelt, not many moderne Diuines but* S. Auſtin, *and* Beda *affirme.*

her from undergoing this tedious pilgrimage. And as she readily undertakes it, so she makes haste in it. She well understood that delayes in spirituall affaires were as dangerous as relapses in bodily diseases.

Her Charity. Behold here a prodigall Charity that hath no respect of it selfe, being onely intentive on the good of another. It was charity that withdrew her from her beloved privacy into the publike view, which till then she had ever shun'd. It was Charity that added wings to her feet, and armed her heart against all sinister accidents that could happen. It was Charity that emboldened her to goe to her cousin without any invitation, not being expected by her, or, happily, by face knowne to her, and with confi-

dence

dence of welcome to enter her houſe. It was charity that caus'd her to tender ſervice there where it was due to her ſelfe. It was charity that cheer'd her up, and ſent her on this congratulating Embaſſy. Laſtly, it was Charity that invited ſanctity it ſelfe encloſed in this happy Maide to haſten to the ſanctification of the childe in the wombe of *Elizabeth*.

Having patiently paſſed the troubles and annoyances of her voyage, ſhe with joy at length arrives at her couſins habitation, into which ſhe no ſooner puts her head, but the reverend Propheteſſe (having no other revealer, nor prompter than the holy Spirit) immediately knoweth the Mother of her Lord to be there preſent,

and knowing doth acknowledge it, and acknowledging doth magnifie her perfections, & profeſſeth her houſe bleſſed in being graced with her vouchſafing to be in it. She at firſt ſight diſcernes in her ſo many, and ſo great concealed vertues and myſteries, that a man would judge ſhe had beene preſent at the enterview of her, and the Angell. Nor did ſhe conceale theſe her excellencies, but did deſcribe them with ſuch skill and zeale, that Fame was even proud ro repeat them. Could the domeſticall ſervants thinke you (having heard their Miſtreſſe predicate her divine qualities, and tranſcendent condition) containe themſelves from divulging a joy which a narrow humane boſome is not capacious enough to receive?

Could

Could they abſtaine from juſtly boaſting that a beauteous bleſſed Maide reſided then in their houſe, which together with their ſoules were by her glorious preſence enlightened?

But I can no longer with-hold my pen from ſetting downe the journey it ſelfe, and their mutuall ſalutations in the ſame words wherein the Text commends them to us. *And* Mary *aroſe in thoſe dayes, and went into the hill-Country with haſte to a City of* Iuda, *and enter'd into the houſe of* Zacharias, *and ſaluted* Elizabeth. *And it came to paſſe as* Elizabeth *heard the ſalutation of* Mary, *the Babe ſprang in her belly, and* Elizabeth *was filled with the holy Ghoſt: and ſhe cryed with a loud voyce, and ſaid. Bleſſed art thou amongſt*

amongst women, because the fruit of thy wombe is blessed. And whence commeth this to passe that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? For loe as soone as the voyce of thy salutation sounded in mine eares, the Babe sprang in my belly for ioy. And blessed is shee that believ'd; for those things shall be performed which were told her from the Lord. Then Mary said; My soule magnifieth the Lord, and my spirit reioyceth in God my Saviour; for he hath regarded the lowlinesse of his handmaid; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. Because he that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is from generation to generation on them that feare him. Hee hath shewed strength with his arme, he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

hearts. He hath put downe the mighty from their ſeates, and hath exalted the humble and meeke. He hath filled the hungry with good things, the rich he hath ſent empty away. He hath vpholden Iſraell his ſeruant, being mindefull of his mercy. As he hath ſpoken to our fathers, to vs, Abraham, and his ſeed for ever.

In this ſalutation of *Elizabeth*, the ſpringing of the Babe in her wombe at the ſound of our ſweeteſt Ladies voyce requires not only our obſervation but aſtoniſhment. He that was greater than all the Prophets as yet not borne, and encloſed in the narrow compaſſe of the Wombe no ſooner heard the charming voyce of this heauenly Nightingale, but he leaped for joy, eſſaying then, and there

to

S. Bernard *saies, that if an Infant was so over-joyd at the sound of her voyce, what will the joy of the Celestiall inhabitants be, when they shall see and heare her?* Serm. 1. de assump. Mariæ.

to exercise the office of the Fore-runner of his Master. The asseveration of some, that this was not an effect of the Virgins vertue, but of the Word incarnate, may be admitted for good, if we onely have an eye to her Vertue, and exclude the aide, and power of the divine Grace. But all Wisedomes Children are by Truth, her selfe informed that many things are lawfully attributed to secondary Causes, the primary and efficient cause not rejected. And this way we may impute to *Mary*, what worke soever God with her co-operating hath wrought either in the house

house of *Zachary*, or else where for the benefit, and instruction of us poore mortals. Neither will any sound, and sollid judgement attribute any thing to the conspicuous merits of the Virgine *Mary*, or any other Saint, without the concurrence and predication of the divine Grace, who by those Saints that serve, and feare him, distributes his gifts, and favours to Mankinde. That sentence of Christ is no way obscure, *He that beleeves in me, shall do the works that I do, and greater.* *Ioh.* 14. By many examples the Scriptures do confirme the comming of Saints to any mans dwelling to conferre upon him both Grace and Happinesse. Three Angels came to *Abraham*, whom he entertain'd taking them for pilgrims, when the Patriarch forth- *Gen.* 18.

with

with became fortunate in the obteining of that for which so long he had offer'd up vows to God, namely a sonne; his wife and he, being by the course of nature, past
Gen.19. the generation of children. Againe, two Angels came to *Lot*, and lodg'd in his house at Sodome, and sav'd their host, and his two daughters from being reduct to cinders with their City. *Iacob*
Gen.30. visited wicked *Laban*, to whom God granted a singular blessing for that idolater, in so much that he himselfe confessed it, saying, *I have learned by experience that God hath blessed me for thy sake.* *Elizeus* to expresse the kindnesse he recei-
4.Kin.4. ved at the hands of his hostesse, the Shunamite, restored her dead sonne to life. The Apostles themselues brought peace, and felicity

to

to all hoſpitable men whoſe dwellings they enter'd. And ſhall the arrivall of Gods owne mother at the houſe of *Zachary* prove onely vaine, and fruitleſſe in bringing no divine conſolation to her kindred? Yes ſurely, *Elizabeth* taſted the fruit of her all-gladding preſence; for ſhe could not conceale the pleaſure conceived in her heart, but utter'd it in the beſt words ſhe could. *John* himſelfe alſo reliſht it, and by his motion gave what ſignes he could of the content, and worſhip he receiv'd, and pay'd. Neither could it otherwiſe be but the Manſion of *Zachary* and the adjacent countrey were both delighted, and ſanctified by the three moneths reſidence of her, who bore not about, but in her, the Author, and conſummatour of all piety.

piety. Their joy, queſtionleſſe, was beyond imagination great, in that they had never before ſeene Gods gifts, and graces paſſing through ſo pure an organ of his Spirit. But the aged Propheteſſe her ſelfe, doubtleſſe was in a holy delitious Trance at the very firſt ſteppe ſhe made over her threſhold, and thought her houſe, but halfe bleſt till the other foot was in. Their muruall ſalutation ſurely was low, and ſubmiſſive; which I cannot better expreſſe then by the ſuppoſition of the encounter of two ſhades ſoftly creeping ore the face of the earth. The Evangeliſt delivereth onely the Compendium of their conference, which could not be but as long as ſerious. They treated ſurely of deepe miraculous Myſteries, as of the incarnation of

the

the Word, of the perſecution of her, and Gods onely Sonne, as alſo of his paſſion, and the ſalvation of Mankinde. And here it will neither be a thing impious nor impertinent (binding our ſelues ſtrictly to the ſubſtance of their ſhort diſcourſe) to ayme at the amplification thereof, by which happily it may come to paſſe that the ſuppoſition of what they might ſay may turne to a Truth of what they ſaid indeed. This then, or like to this was, or might be the ſpeech of the holy Matron to the more holy Virgin.

What looks ſhall I put on? What words ſhall I aſſume, what entertainment ſhall I finde out, O Princely Virgin! to give thee a welcome anſwerable to thy merits who art Superiour, to

the Saints in Heaven, and the prime glory of thy Sex on Earth? I am wholly transformed into ſhame when I conſider every way thy Excellency, and my unworthineſſe. Alas! what is there in miſerable me that ſhould invite the mother of my Lord to afford me a viſit, who am the meaneſt of his Creatures? What equality is here? Thou who art full of Grace, comeſt to me void of it: Thou who art famous for thy Fertilitie to me who have been long time infamous for my Barrenneſſe. Thy Charity and Humility made thee forget thy ſublime and my low eſtate, and conducted thee to my poore Cottage no way fit to receive thee. Moſt of thy Sexe having attained to thy ſupreame condition (who did'ſt conceive and nouriſh the Creatour and Redeemer of the world with that thy cleareſt bloud of which he was made)

made) would have advanced their heads above Mortality, and disdaining all inferiour Conversation would have demanded as their due, to be assumed into the imperiall Heaven. But in thee, one heat hath expelled another, the flames of thy zeale have utterly consumed those of thy Pride (if any thou ever had'st) and thou art so farre from vaunting, that thou by all meanes seekest to conceale that daintie Fruit of which all Posterity shall taste, and never be satisfied, and for which all Generations shall call thee blessed. But from others thou mayst hide it, from me thou canst not, to whom the Spirit hath reveal'd it, and the springing of the Childe in my wombe hath testified it; and if the Children of Israel should be so dull, and unhappy, as not to apprehend it, God would give the stones an articulate voyce to proclaime

claime it. The Lord of mee, and all things elſe, hath firmely ſeated him ſelfe in thee, and choſen thee for his mother, to the end that the ſeed of Abraham may breake the head of the Serpent, and the Sonne of David bring reliefe to his forlorne and diſtreſſed Church, ſtreightly beſeiged by the Prince of Darkneſſe, and his infernall Troopes. True it is, I am above thee in yeares, but in deſert infinitely below thee, and therfore ought to have prevented this thy painfull journey by comming firſt to thee to congratulate thy happineſſe, and not onely in the behalfe of my ſelfe, my kindred, and Nation, but in the name of Gods ſelected people to tender thee moſt humble though not condigne thanks for ſo readily aſſenting to beare, bring forth, and educate their Soveraigne Lord and Redeemer. But thou having gotten

ten the ſtart of me in goodneſſe, art come to me ere I could ſet forward towards thee, and now thou art here, I repine at nothing more than at my diſability to ſerve thee. Thou who meriteſt to have the earth, the water, and the ayre ranſack't to pleaſe thy pallat, ſhall have nothing here but the ſimple viands of Nature prepared by as ſimple an Art. But truſt me, what ever is here is truely thine owne, and my ſelfe to boot. My willing heart to waite on thee, and obey all thy Commands, ſhall ſupply all other defects. Such is my deſire to attend, and pleaſe thee that doe but ſignifie thy pleaſure by the leaſt becke or nod, and thou ſhalt ſee how nimbly I will beſtirre theſe aged limmes, and place before thine eyes a plaine and evident converſion of Impotency into Ability. I ſhall not

thinke any paines my weakeneſſe can endure too great, nor any coſt my purſe can compaſſe too deare for thee. Wherfore I earneſtly beſeech thee to bleſſe me, and my houſe with thy long abode, and let not our courſe and ſlender fare make thee haſten my death in thy ſudden returne. O my brighteſt Starre! envy me not thy comfortable ſhine, but let me Live in it till I exchange it for a brighter in Heaven. The dayes of my Pilgrimage are even now at an end; O leave me not then, who art the Staffe and Solace of mine Age! but ſtay the arrivall of my laſt minute, and with thy faireſt hands cloſe up theſe my dimme eyes. So ſhall I bid farewell to this world with content, and enter the other with glory. Thou my ſweeteſt Princeſſe who haſt verified the Prophecy of Eſay, and being an unſpotted Virgin, doſt conceive and bring

bring forth to the world our Emanuell; grant this my first, and most humble request. O thou daughter of Abraham! *who hast surpassed thy Fathers Faith in beleeving things which seeme more impossible to humane Reason: if in this rude speech of mine I have over-talked my selfe, or under-spoken thee, impute it to my declining and doting yeares, and grant me thy Pardon. Thus I end, but not without adding to those I have already given thee, a Myriade of Welcomes, and a millions of Aves more.*

The vertuous Maid undoubtedly was not here mute, but devided her speech betweene God and her Cousin. She directed (with I know not whether greater Piety, or Prudency) her praise to the former ere she would vouchsafe to

make a reply to the latter. An answer without all peradventure her humanity afforded her, and to this purpose for ought we know, might it be.

" Deareſt Couſin, your own wiſe-
" dome will plead my excuſe, in
" that I rendred him laud to whom
" it belongs, ere I accepted of it my
" ſelfe to whom it is not due. You
" magnifie me, and I my Creator.
" Your ſacred iſſue moved with de-
" light at the ſound of my harſh
" voyce, and my ſpirit rejoyceth in
" the Mercy of my ſweeteſt Savi-
" our. You give me attributes more
" proper to my Maker than to me,
" not unlike thoſe Heathen who
" take off the heads from the Ima-
" ges of their Gods, and faſten them
" to the ſhoulders of their Princes

Sta-

" Statues. Your commendations fit
" your ſelfe better than me, and re-
" ſemble thoſe reſplendent rayes
" which returne into the radiant bo-
" dy that ſent them forth. In a
" word, you have ſubſcribed my
" Name to your owne Character.
" The humbling and undervaluing
" of your ſelf is a ſtrong argument of
" your vertue; for in a field of
" Corne we ſee the empty eares to
" hold up their heads, the fuller to
" hang them downe. I am in my
" Spring, you in your Autumne; I
" produce the Bloſſome, but you
" beare the fruit. What the moſt
" penetrating Eye can diſcerne in
" me, the moſt partiall Tongue will
" call a ſuperficiall ornament, but
" the dimmeſt ſight may ſoone diſ-
" cover that in you, which the moſt
" detracting Penne muſt be forced

to

make a reply to the latter. An answer without all peradventure her humanity afforded her, and to this purpose for ought we know, might it be.

" Deareſt Couſin, your own wiſe-
" dome will plead my excuſe, in
" that I rendred him laud to whom
" it belongs, ere I accepted of it my
" ſelfe to whom it is not due. You
" magnifie me, and I my Creator.
" Your ſacred iſſue moved with de-
" light at the ſound of my harſh
" voyce, and my ſpirit rejoyceth in
" the Mercy of my ſweeteſt Savi-
" our. You give me attributes more
" proper to my Maker than to me,
" not unlike thoſe Heathen who
" take off the heads from the Ima-
" ges of their Gods, and faſten them
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" your vertue; for in a field of
" Corne we ſee the empty eares to
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" Spring, you in your Autumne; I
" produce the Bloſſome, but you
" beare the fruit. What the moſt
" penetrating Eye can diſcerne in
" me, the moſt partiall Tongue will
" call a ſuperficiall ornament, but
" the dimmeſt ſight may ſoone diſ-
" cover that in you, which the moſt
" detracting Penne muſt be forced

to

" to ſtyle eſſentiall worth. Thus dig-
" nified, give me leave to tell you,
" ſweeteſt Couſin, that you offer
" me an affront together with your
" ſervice. A ſeemely ſight it were
" ſurely to behold decrepit age wai-
" ting on active youth, wiſedome
" on vanity; a venerable Matron on
" a ſimple Girle. The ſcope of my
" journey is to attend you, to lend
" you my ſtrength, now your owne
" failes you, and to ſerve you
" through all the offices of your
" Hand-maid. Doe but intimate
" your will by the leaſt ſigne, and
" you ſhall ſee me flye to performe
" it. Your Invention cannot de-
" viſe any thing ſo impoſſible,
" which my will (ambitious to
" pleaſe you) will not judge moſt
" eaſie to be executed. Whereas
" you intreat me to ſtay long with
you,

" you, you tranſgreſſe the Lawes of
" Friendſhip in petitioning her
" whom you may juſtly and bold-
" ly command. A thing ſtrange to
" me it is, that you ſhould thinke
" me ſo ſtupid and ſenceleſſe, as
" that I ſhould need an invitation to
" be made truely happy. Before I
" had the honour to ſee you, I envi-
" ed thoſe that enjoyed your ſweet
" and divine converſation, and
" thought they enricht themſelves
" with my loſſe; wherefore a ſtaffe
" to beat me hence is more requi-
" ſite, than Oratory to keepe mee
" here. Ever ſince the bleſſed An-
" gell imparted to me the newes of
" your being fruitfull, my deſire to
" ſee you hath beene reſtleſſe, and
" next to God I have onely medita-
" ted you and your goodneſſe. O
" my beſt Couſin! whoſe fervent
and

" and devout prayers obtaine vic-
" ries, whose Fasts abundance, joy
" with me in thankesgiving to God
" for the grace which I shall neve
" be able to conceive, much lesse to
" expresse or deserve. Him with all
" my heart and with all my soule I
" invoke, that blessings may fal
" upon you before, and above you
" wishes, and that you may ye
" long live to his glory, and my
" Comfort.

Had their three months demeanour each to other, together with their godly discourse, and pious practise of it, beene penn'd to posterity (had all other Bookes been burnt save that and the Bible) the Femall sexe in these two should have found matter ample enough to exercise both their Meditation and

and action. Sure I am the Romiſh Church, as in an honourable memoriall of this their Charitable Encounter, hath ordained the Annuall Celebration of a ſolemne Feaſt. And the Councell of *Baſil* (of what authoritie in other things I know not certainly in this one particular very commendable) hath decreed the ſolemnization of this Feſtivall day in theſe verie words.

Sess. 43. *Concil. Basileen.*

The Bleſſed Virgin being inſtructed by the celeſtiall Meſſenger, and conducted by the Holy Ghoſt, aſcended in haſte the mountanous Countrey, and entred the humble houſe of Zachary. *or* IESUS *who was in her wombe, made haſte to bleſſe* Iohn *as yet in his Mothers Belly. And the moſt glorious Virgin viſiting her Couſen* Elizabeth, *was pleaſing to her both in her loving*

loving visitation, and fruitfull Col-
loquie. The Consideration of this Ex-
celling Mystery ought to delight the
mindes of the Faithfull, wherein these
two glorious Mothers (who bore about
them the comencement and accom-
plishment of our Salvation) did so fa-
miliarly communicate their joyes, and
wherein the most excellent Virgin
Mary of the House of David, and E-
lizabeth the most venerable among
the Daughters of Aaron discours'd
together. The first of these had inclu-
sed in her wombe the Creatour and
Redeemer of us all, the latter his Fore-
runner. These Saints being made Mo-
thers by a Miracle conferr'd together
of the Divine benefits they had recei-
ved. The meeting of this worthy paire
was most happie, and illustrated with
great, and glorious testimonies of the
divine Grace. The one conceived by
the

the cooperation of the holy Spirit, the other by Myracle in her old Age, and both their iſſues foretold by the celeſtiall Angell. Iohn *as yet impriſoned in his Mothers wombe doth worſhip his Lord borne to him in* Maries *Belly; and* Elizabeth *fill'd with the Holy Ghoſt doth congratulate the Conception of the Sonne of God, and the Saviour of Mankinde, and prophecying declares her Couſen bleſſed in beleeving, and contemplating the myſteries revealed to her. On the other ſide* Mary *full of unutterable joy, layed up all theſe ſayings in her heart, which before ſhe had heard from the Angel, and now from* Elizabeth, *and breaks out into a Song of Thankſgiving to the Lord. Who can ſufficiently praiſe ſo great Myſteries? Who can declare thoſe joyes to the full?* Iohn *not yet borne rejoyceth,* Elizabeth *is delighted*

ed with the arrivall of the Virgin. Mary is extreamely pleased in the Mysteries, the Saviour of the world is acknowledged by his Fore-runner, not onely the Angels, but Heaven and Earth resent the pleasure, and the whole Trinitie is glorified with new praises. Wherefore the greatnesse of these joyes is to be extolled with especiall commendations, and with singular solemnities to be celebrated, and the Lord in the wombe, the Virgin that beares him, the barren that conceives, and the Fore-runner that is sanctified ought to be presented with all imaginable praises and honours.

With this pious and gratefull ordinance of the Church I conclude the visitation of our incomparable Lady, and now proceed to her Deliverie.

We

We reade in holy Writ of three ſupernaturall Productions, the one of *Adam*, the other of *Eve*, the laſt of *Chriſt*, which as moſt miraculous we are now to treat of. Here in his *Nativitie*, as before in his *Conception*, let us turne *Inquiſition* into *thanksgiving*, and with one ſpirit and voyce ſing aloud, *The ſtone which the Builders refuſed is the head of the corner. This was the Lords doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made, let us rejoyce, and be glad in it.* This is our wedding-day, wherein by the Sonne we are joyned to the Father. This is the day of the new union, wherein he who is God remaineth the ſame that he was, yet for our ſakes is borne, and made what he was not; wherein he that

Her delivery.

Pſ. 118. 22.

was every where without a Body, is made present to us by a Body, that what God hath by *Nature*, men might receive by *Grace*. This is a great, a joyfull, a fortunate, a desired day, the end of the Law, the end of the *Prophets*, the beginning of the Gospell, nay the Gospell it selfe. This is a day of State, usher'd by the Angels, follow'd by the Apostles. Let our Mindes remove the distance of Time and place, and dwell a while with our all-holy-Lord and blessed Lady, lest we loose the pleasure of this day, the least Accident whereof is Mysterious. What a brave assembly of Visitants of all Conditions resorted this day to this place, which then might rightly be called the Randevous of the Saints? Would you see those who are a-

bove

bove men, but below him who is borne? Behold the Angels singing his birth. Do you desire to behold the married? Here you have *Zachary* and *Elizabeth*. The unmarried? Here you have *Symeon*. Widdows? Here you have *Anna*. Priests? Here againe you have *Zachary*. Wise men? Here you have them from the East. Ideots? You have here the Shepheards. But here is to be noted, that these keepers of Beasts heare the voyce of the Angels before any of the other, first receive the Gospell, and first divulge it. And in this they were more happie then *Augustus* himselfe, who (though he had made a firme Peace by Sea and Land, and had now the third time shut up the Temple of *Ianus*) yet was he ignorant of the blessed

Peace concluded on betwixt God and Man. O how much ſometimes Ignorance avails in Divine matters! Kings, Potentates, the Rulers of the Earth, and the wiſe of this world are aſleepe while Chriſt is borne. Theſe moſt ſimple of Mortals, and innocent as the creatures they tend, watch all night, and therefore are firſt made partakers of theſe joyfull news. As their owne wooll not yet dipt in any dye readily drinks in any colour they pleaſe to beſtow on it: So their minds voyd of all humane wiſedome, greedily ſuckt in the Divine; Faith is the *Compendium* of Salvation, and humane knowledge of times the obſtacle of Faith. *Ariſtotle* having confined to Heaven, the Maker, and Moover of it, would never have beleeved his

his birth here below. *Plato* would have derided this miraculous relation, who the more he attributed to God, the leſſe would he have expected his ſo humble comming into the world. Neither would the Stoicks who held God to be a fire, nor *Hipocrates* who thought him to be a warm'th, ever have look't for him clad in fleſh and bloud. Wherefore they are here elected witneſſes of this ſtrange truth, whoſe Science was of ability ſtrongly to beleeve, not wittily to diſpute. O what proficients in Faith did theſe ruſticall Swaines prove in a moment! What a profound ſecret is imparted to them? Let us examine the verity of this by that infallible Touch-ſtone, the text. *And there were in the ſame Country, Shepheards abiding in the field,*

& keeping watch by night, because of their flocke, and loe the Angell of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone about them, and they were sore afraid. Then the Angell said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold I bring you tidings of great joy that shall be to all the people: That is, that unto you is borne this day a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a signe unto you; you shall finde the Childe swadled and layd in a Cratch. And straight way there was with the Angell a multitude of heavenly Souldiers, praysing God, and saying; Glory be to God in the high Heaven, and Peace on Earth, and towards men good will. And it came to passe that when the Angels were gone away from thence into Heaven, that the Shepheards said one to another; Let us goe then unto

Beth-

Bethlem, *and ſee this thing that is come to paſſe, which the Lord hath ſhewed unto us*; *ſo they came with haſte, and found both* Mary *and* Ioſeph *with the Babe layd in the Cratch. And when they had ſeene it, they publiſht abroad the thing that was told them of that Childe.*

Here three things eſpecially are remarkable:

Firſt, their forwardneſſe in believing:

Secondly, the ſpeed they made to ſee what they had believed, and

Thirdly, to publiſh what they had ſeene.

That they quickly believed, appeares by the haſte they made to ſee. They no ſooner ſaw him, but they found him to be the King of Iſraell indeed, yet withall to be a

Shepheard. They instantly discerne this to be the Shepheard, who was to lay downe his life for his flocke. The Prince of all Shepheards whose sheepe-fold is the world: The Shepheard that was to seperate the Goates from the Sheepe. They discover'd this to be the immaculate Lambe that was to take away the sinnes of the world. They disclos'd this Lamb to be the greatest Lyon of the Tribe of *Iudah*. Whom now they looke on in the Cratch, Saint *Iohn* shall hereafter behold on his Throne. These men in whom there was no guile as they could not deceive others, so they could not in this be deceiv'd. They needed not suspect any fallacy, and therefore might safely relate this divine wonder to all they met.

The

The ſecond witneſſes of this Miracle are the Wiſe men. After God had laid open the Treaſure of his divine ſecrets to Idiots, he ſhewes them alſo to the wiſe. It ſeemes the Earth at this time was become the Booke of Gods greateſt Myſteries, and Heaven the Index. In this they finde the Star of this King of the Iewes, which (having beene before the declarer of his Nativity) they now make their guide in their journey. The Starre performing this duty to its Creator, at length brings them to *Bethlem*, where they view him in the Crateh, whoſe Nativity before they had found in the Heavens. To him they doe Homage, tender adoration, and pay Tribute, and opening their Treaſures,

ſures, make him an oblation of Gold, Incenſe, and Mirrhe. Whom before they had in vaine ſought in the Heavens, they now finde on the earth, and in the moſt ſorded part of it, a Stable, full of ſeverall ſtinkes; where he (to whom none are worthy to be ſervants) had two dull Beaſts for his Companions.

Returne now you Sonnes of wiſedome to your owne home, by much more learned, by more than much more happy than when you ſet out. Heaven is now ſet open to you, which before your unbeliefe kept ſhut againſt you. If you be Chaldæans or Perſians, or both, ſpreade through thoſe Nations the fame of that which you have ſeene. Publiſh in all places this the greateſt myſtery of Piety, which

which God is onely able to produce, onely faith can apprehend. Of all Creatures to man onely belongs the gift of Reason, by the rule whereof he measures all things. But doe not you doe so, lest you fall not onely into an irreparable, but a damnable errour. Follow you the instruction of Faith, and where ere you come with a holy Pride, proclaime that God is manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seene by Angels, reveal'd to Shepheards, found out and ador'd by you your selves, and hereafter to be assum'd, and to sit in glory farre above those starres you daily read. Goe, and give out that there is nothing greater in Heaven, than what you have found in a Stable. Yet ere you depart, convince the stiffe-necked Iewes of their lofty, but grosse errour, in diligently seeking to know God in that part wherein

wherein he will lye hid, a
in taking no notice of him
that part wherein he wo
be knowne: in looking for
Saviour from * *Heaven, w*
is already borne on earth
Yet now I consider their obs
nacy better, I wish you
spare your here fruitlesse a
vise: for the eares of th
wicked generation is stopped
their hearts obdurate, a
they are as fully resolved
goe on in their wickednesse, a
you in your journey.

* *The Iews when ever it lighteneth, set open their windowes: for they hold their Saviour shall come in lightening. On this reade* Buxdorfius.

Having proved his Nativity by these holy Testators, let us now enter our selves, and view this pretty one in his narrow lodging, lay our selves prostrate before

before him, worſhip him, and re-create our ſelues with the lovely object. And that our delight may be the greater, let us firſt behold him, and his ſweeteſt Mother a part, and then both together. But let us here ſhut out the Phariſees, and barre them the ſight of this Heavenly Infant, who urge the Law, and reject him the Author of it. Let us exclude the Arrians, who deny his coequalitie with the Father, and the Sabellians who confound the Trinitie, of which he is diſtinctly one, and hold that there is in it one Eſſence, and one perſon: and the Samoſatenians, who derogate from his Nature, and avouch the Word (which truly he is) to be no other then a vaniſhing ſound. Nor let us onely keepe out theſe, but the whole

ſwarme

ſwarme alſo of Atheiſts, and He-
reticks. Let the Philoſophers to
ſtay without, who not ſo impious
yet more ignorant, cannot dive t
the bottome of this Myſtery. Bu
to all thoſe who are honour'd i
the aſſumption and profeſſion o
his glorious Name a free acceſſe i
granted. Enter then you little
flock, you few whom his Fathe
hath beſtowed on him, and ſe
him, who when he gave the Law
appeared in Fire, now he offers
Grace involv'd in Hay. Yet in thi
dejected poſture, in this courſe
manner while he lay, he wanted
not a whole Army of Angelicall
ſpirits that declar'd his Birth to
Men, and they who had before
chanted his praiſes as he ſate in
Glory, now ſing his goodneſſe ly-
ing in the Cratch. Though he have

a

a hoomely roofe over his head, the East obſerves his approach. Though the poverty of his Humanitie obſcures his Deity, the Starres in Heaven make it known. Behold him who came humble to the humble, for the humble, and yet his humility is above all ſublimity. Reverently and intentively look on him who deſcended from Heaven to Earth, who came to you, into you, who is borne in the night, borne in the midſt of Winter, and borne (after the wretched humane condition) naked, and none offer him aſſiſtance. Swadling clothes are wanting, ſome ragges are found out, a Cradle is miſſing, a Manger is at hand.

Here he cryes to you, and holds up his pretty hands to Heaven, which he cals

cals to witneſſe that he can humble himſelfe no lower. Can you view this humble, this mercifull ſpectacle, and not weepe your ſelues into marble: O ſpeedily put on ſackcloth! beſprinckle your ſelues with Aſhes, kneele downe in the duſt and dung under the Manger where your Lord lyes, knock your ſelues on the boſomes, fetch ſighs and grones from the bottom of your hearts, repay him the teares he lent you, and by your ſad geſture and deportment demonſtrate how much you are bound to him who ſuffered for you even in his Birth.

Having ſeene the Sonne, now ſtedfaſtly place your eyes upon the Mother. Behold the unpolluted Mayd (a great part of the wonder) ſitting neare the Manger, being voyd of all luſt, chaſt in Soule

and

and Body, who doth now confeſſe that of which ſhe is not capable without a miracle, to wit, that ſhe is a Mother, and with fixed eyes expreſſing now joy, now admiration, ſees her ſelfe wedded to Heaven. She beholds her ſelfe a Mother deliver'd of her Parent, a handmaid of her King, and Maſter. She to her aſtoniſhment finds that ſhe hath brought forth an iſſue more mighty then *David*, more ancient then *Adam*. And now ſhe feeles the tender, and ardent affection of a Mother, but the old love ſhe hath borne her virginity gives it an allay. Here the Mother, the Midwife, and the Nurſe are one and the ſame, leſt any thing leſſe pure ſhould handle him then her who brought him forth. And now ſhe nurſeth this Heavenly in-

fant with her pure milke, which flows from no mortall luſt, but from the Celeſtiall Grace. Her breaſts white as their owne milke preſſed by her delicate fingers, as white as either, he ſoftly pats, and playes with. Sometimes he repaires to them for ſport, ſometimes for neceſſity, and he who feeds all things elſe draws thence his nouriſhment. He caſteth up now one eye, now the other, and with a pleaſing looke gives her a ſweet ſmile, not unlike to that which *Zephirus* imprints on the cheeke of the Roſe. She returnes him another, and her infinite, but chaſte, affection ſhe divides betweene her Sonne, and her virginity. And now her extaſie being a little over, ſhe cals to minde that ſhe hath often read her owne ſtory

fore-

fore-told by the Prophets, *That a Virgin ſhould bring forth a Sonne.*

Fly, O fly farre hence you Monſters of women, who carry leprous ſoules in polluted bodies, and have not one vertue to reſcue you from the Legion of your vices. Depart hence you who are ſlaves to Luſt, whoſe fetters you have worne ſo long, that they have made a deepe impreſſion in your mindes. You who have ſpent your time in the ſearch after alluring dreſſes, and in wanton dalliance ſhall have no entrance here. You who have received with delight one warme Maſculine kiſſe, ſhall here be excluded. Nay you who have had onely one unchaſte thought, ſhall not here be admitted, without being prepared by a cleanſing hearty Repentance. This is the lodging of Purity, into which nothing muſt

come that is uncleane. But you whose chaste eyes have never sent out lustfull beames, nor received them in, whose Bosomes have beene of proofe against the fierce assaults and Batteries of Temptation, you are so farre from being forbidden to come here, that you are earnestly invited hither. You who have lived spirituall Amorists, whose spirits have triumphed over the Flesh, on whose Cheeks Solitude, Prayers, Fasts, and Austerity have left an amiable pale: You who ply your sacred Arithmeticke, and have thoughts cold, and cleare as the Christall beads you pray by: You who have vow'd virginity mentall, and corporall, you shall not onely have ingresse here, but welcome. Approach with Comfort, and kneele downe before the Grand white Immaculate Abbesse of your snowy Nunneries, and

present

present the all-saving Babe in her Armes with due veneration. Never thinke more of the Facunditie of Wedlocke, since you see here that God himselfe is the fruit of Virginity. You who have tyed your selves in holy bands, from which you wish never but by death to be freed, who have chose rather lawfully to yeeld to the rebellious desires of the flesh, than unlawfully to subdue them: you who in fidelity and simplicity of life have strictly imitated Christ and his Spouse: you whose Fertility is blessed, not onely in preserving and propagating the humane Race, but in augmenting also the number of the Saints in heaven, to you a free and open accesse is given. You widdowed Turtles, who have lost your Mates, and either have vowed never to match againe, or pray'd to God that when you doe, it

come that is uncleane. But you whose chaste eyes have never sent out lustfull beames, nor received them in, whose Bosomes have beene of proofe against the fierce assaults and Batteries of Temptation, you are so farre from being forbidden to come here, that you are earnestly invited hither. You who have lived spirituall Amorists, whose spirits have triumphed over the Flesh, on whose Cheeks Solitude, Prayers, Fasts, and Austerity have left an amiable pale: You who ply your sacred Arithmeticke, and have thoughts cold, and cleare as the Christall beads you pray by: You who have vow'd virginity mentall, and corporall, you shall not onely have ingresse here, but welcome. Approach with Comfort, and kneele downe before the Grand white Immaculate Abbesse of your snowy Nunneries, and

present

preſent the all-ſaving Babe in her Armes with due veneration. Never thinke more of the Fœcunditie of Wedlocke, ſince you ſee here that God himſelfe is the fruit of Virginity. You who have tyed your ſelves in holy bands, from which you wiſh never but by death to be freed, who have choſe rather lawfully to yeeld to the rebellious deſires of the fleſh, than unlawfully to ſubdue them: you who in fidelity and ſimplicity of life have ſtrictly imitated Chriſt and his Spouſe: you whoſe Fertility is bleſſed, not onely in preſerving and propagating the humane Race, but in augmenting alſo the number of the Saints in heaven, to you a free and open acceſſe is given. You widdowed Turtles, who have loſt your Mates, and either have vowed never to match againe, or pray'd to God that when you doe, it

may be to his glory; you also shall have admittance. Virgins, Wives, and Widdowes, ioyne hands, and encircle this the most perfect paire that ever graced the earth: Behold to your astonishment, and also to your consolation a milde and gentle Maide, in whom neither Childe-birth defaceth Virginity, nor Virginity fruitfulnesse. Feed your eyes with the sight of her whose minde is a Paradice without a Serpent, on whose lookes, words, and actions, Modesty is a diligent attender. And now in Peace doe you depart too, but take this charitable Admonition along with you, that (in emulation of this your deerest Mistresse) you lay up all her graces and perfections in your hearts, and withall continually meditate her patience, which contented it selfe with bad lodging, and worse accommodation, the sad re-

remembrance whereof hath made me ever since I read this passage, not to be very solicitous where, or how I lye.

22. *And when the dayes of her Purification, according to the Law of Moses were accomplished they brought him to Hierusalem, to present him to the Lord:*

Having waited on her in her Delivery, we will now attend her to her Purification. This day (the celebration whereof is instituted by the Church) is called *Candlemasse*, as much as to say, the *Day of Lights*, on which (while Masse was singing) very many Tapours were burning in the Church. The Lustration of houses was yearely usuall with the Romans in the moneth of February, from whence this custome in the Church is derived. *Innocentius* thus propounds and solves the Question. *What is the reason, saith he, that on this Holy day we use so many Lights in the Church? The cause of this institution is two-fold. The first is, that a Heathenish custome may be converted into a Christian Right or Ordinance, and that*

Her Purification.

In serm. de Purif. B. Mar. Ving.

that which was performed by ſuperſtitious Idolaters in honour of Ceres *and* Proſerpina, *may be turned into the praiſe and glory of the Virgin* Mary. *The ſecond is, that they who by Grace are purified, by this Ceremony may be admoniſhed to imitate thoſe prudent Virgins, who (as the Evangelicall Parable teſtifieth) came not without their Tapours lighted to the Nuptials of Chriſt their Spouſe.* This day the Church uſed to pray, that as the viſible Lights chaſed away the darkeneſſe of the night: ſo the hearts of the Faithfull might be illuminated by the Inviſible flames of the holy Spirit, &(being cured of their blindneſſe brought upon them by vice)might with pure and cleare eyes diſcerne thoſe things which are pleaſing to God, and neceſſary to their ſalvation;

tion; and having paſs'd through the ſad, darke, and diſmall accidents of this world, might at length arrive at Heaven, where they ſhall behold, and enjoy a Light everlaſting. This day is not onely made Holy by the Purification of the Mother, but by the oblation alſo and preſentation of the Sonne, of whom, as of the more worthy, we muſt firſt diſcourſe.

It was truely a great abaſing of the Sonne of God (for which by the Prophets he was ſtyled a Servant) who being not a debtor to the Law, but the Lord of it, and the onely First-borne free from ſinne, yet endured and underwent with other Children, both the Iewiſh Circumciſion and oblation, and at once publikely honour'd

nour'd his Fathers house, and (to use the Prophets phrase) fill'd it with glory. There offer'd by the Virgin hands of his Mother, he was to his Father a most pleasing oblation, being the end of the Law, and all the antient Sacrifices. Neither was the longing of *Simeon* and *Anna* onely satisfied with his aspect, but the ardent wishes also of many others, in whose mindes the old sparke of Faith now burst out into new and bright flames, which did not onely illuminate their owne, but other Bosomes also. Not a few, questionlesse, at *Hierusalem*, markt this day with a white stone, and did celebrate it with joy and thankesgiving, in that the Light foretold by *Esay* then arose, and comforted all those to whom the shine and warmth

warmth of it extended. *Israel* had never ſeene her Meſſias, till then when ſhe had free leave to kiſſe, embrace, and dandle him in her Armes, and therefore her joy muſt of neceſſity be more than ordinary. Yet ſome of her inhabitants were deafe, and could not heare the Prophets proclaime his comming; others were blinde, and could not diſcerne him being come, nor were ſenſible at all of the Honour they received in the venerable preſence of him, and his incomparable Mother.

I now come to our ſweeteſt Lady, the time of whoſe Lying in being expired, ſhe ſets forward to the Temple. I have read ſome who poetically ſet downe her going thither, and compare her to

Auro-

Aurora, whom the Poets describe ſitting in a golden Chariot drawn by a *Pegaſus*, her yellow haire ſpred over her milky ſhoulders, with a Torch in her hand enlightning this inferiour world. For my owne part (though of all humane ſtudies I am moſt taken with Poeſy) yet both by Nature and Grace I abhorre to write of things divine in the ſtile of the ſtage. But this Religion and modeſty will licenſe me to averre, That when ſhe went to be Purified, ſhe was in all things the very figure and reſemblance of Sanctity it ſelfe. No doubt but ſhe was accompanied with a Beavy of Shee-Saints, of which ſhe was the Chorus. Neither was *Ioſeph* abſent, who as before he had beene a guardiant of her, and her Infant in her Delivery when he

was

was not capable of the Miracle; So now he is altogether incapable of his owne Felicity in attending his faireſt Mate, and deareſt Maſter to the holy Temple. And who doubts but this bleſſed one joy'd more in this Iourney than *Ioſeph* or any other. Saint *Iohn* and Saint *Luke* teſtifie that it was a religious cuſtome amongſt the very Heathen from remote places to come to *Hieruſalem*, and in the Temple thereof to performe their devotions. Doe you thinke this pious Maide can be out-ſtripped in the performance of a holy duty by the Gentiles? Can you imagine ſhe could neglect and looſe the occaſion of time and place offered her, to commend to her Maker in her beſt words the vowes and prayers of her prepared

Iohn 12.
Acts 2.8

red heart? She came to *Hierusalem* (for certainly she dwelt not there) with farre greater speed and joy, questionlesse, than to her Cousins house, this being a businesse that much more concern'd her, in that she was by more and stronger tyes bound to serve God than *Elizabeth*. And here by the way we must not omit her Humility and Charity. Of the first whereof we have a cleere demonstration in this, That what other women did out of feare of the Law, she was perswaded by a perfect faith, and an humble obedience to performe. For that her Purification was necessary, I beleeve no man will affirme, unlesse in this sense, That the Rites and Ceremonies imposed on the purified by *Moses*, were with decency

Her Humility.

decency to be obſerved by her who had borne him that came to fulfill, not to deſtroy the Law. She could not be maculated in conceiving, becauſe ſhe knew no man, nor in bearing, by reaſon it was without a man. Why ſhould ſhe be ſolicitous to redeeme her Sonne, who was himſelfe the Redeemer of the world? This was aſſuredly an act produced by her Humility, as was alſo her refuſing the company of the rich, and her aſſociating the poore and needy, though moſt impure, and abject. And ſhe her ſelfe was ſo penurious, that ſhe had not wherewithall to buy a Lambe, whereof to make oblation. Whereas the Rich hide and hourd up their wealth, ſhe drawes forth the * Treaſure brought her by the Wiſe men,

Her charity. * *This is the obſervation of* Dammianus, Dammaſcen, *& many more.*

and with alacrity distributes it amongst those whose wants required it: yet was part of the present gold, which upon charitable uses surely was consumed; for her Frugality and Temperancy were such, that in so short a time she could not possibly have spent the value of it. But these perfections are not to be wondred at in her, who being a Doctresse, scorn'd not to be a Disciple, and strongly to endeavour the attaining even to those vertues which by Nature were innate, and by Grace engrafted in her. Ravisht in soule with these her Excellencies, me thinkes I see her Majestically pacing on to the Temple, and heare her thus speake to those who accompanied and met her on the way.

My deare friends, Sisters, and fellow servants, I have ever desir'd and endeavour'd (as neare as Humane frailtie will give me leave) to imitate my sweetest Sonne, whose profound Humility and perfect obedience can never sufficiently be extolled. Full well he knew Humility to make the first step to eternall life; Obedience the second; the former of which to teach all men he descended from Heaven, the latter to demonstrate, he became obedient to his Father, even to the suffering of the cursed death of the Crosse. Would you see me a Proficient in both these supernaturall vertues: Behold me who am unpolluted, (as not having conceived by humane meanes) going like one vitious, and impure to be purified. I who am free from the observation of the Mosaicall

Lawes and Ceremonies, have ſubjected my ſelfe to them. I who am voyd of all wilfull ſinne, willingly goe amongſt other ſinfull and uncleane women, that I may be to all an Example of Charity and Humility, to none a preſident of ruine. I thought it not enough that my fruitfull Virginity had produced Salvation to the world, unleſſe by Example alſo I taught how this Grace (applicable to all, applied but to a few) by you alſo might be obtained. This is my way to the attainement of celeſtiall glory, and let it be yours to purchaſe your ſelves eternall ſalvation. Doe thus, live thus, that you may ſhine holy Tapers in Gods militant Church, and glorious Stars in his Triumphant.

She with her devout traine being come into the Temple offer'd her

her gift to the Prieſt, and received a propheticke Benediction from *Symeon*. Whether this old man were a Prieſt, or a Layman, I will not here diſpute; certainly he was a man bleſſed above all the Patriarchs and Prophets, in that he ſaw God face to face, and may be ſtyled the moſt profound of all Divines, who (being the laſt juſt man of the Law, the firſt of Grace, a Iew by Religion, in Thankſgiving a Chriſtian) comprehended ſo many Myſteries in ſo few words. This holy Man (the Scribes and Phariſees dreaming on no ſuch matter) had long ſince ſeene his Saviour comming, whom he no ſooner ſaw borne into the Temple by his mother (who then reſembled Modeſty ſupporting ſanctity) but he ſnatcht this prettie

Timoth. presb. Hierosol. in orat. de Prophet. Simeone.

Babe out of her Armes into his owne, and not able to containe his joy, in a divine Rapture Swanne-like (his death being then at hand) ſung this his ſweeteſt Ditty. *Lord now letteſt thou thy Servant depart in Peace: for mine eyes have ſeene thy Salvation, which thou haſt prepared before the face of all Nations, a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and to the glory of thy people Iſrael. And he bleſſed them, and ſaid unto* Mary *his mother, Behold this Childe is appointed for the fall and riſing againe of many in Iſrael, and for a ſigne which ſhall be ſpoken againſt, yea and a ſword ſhall paſſe through thy Soule, that the thoughts of many hearts may be opened. And* Anna *a Propheteſſe confeſſed the ſame to all thoſe who looked for the Redemption of Iſrael.* *Luke* 2. If the viewing and embracing of Chriſt

Christ so dilated the spirits of the old mans heart, and made him so sensible of this his great felicitie, that he would expect here no greater, but desired rather a dissolution then the fruition of any thing else on earth, What may we judge her content to be, who conceiv'd, bore, brought forth, and brought him up? Whose affectionate looks, kisses, and embraces he had by day, the two later of which the night it selfe could not barre him of. Her greatest detracters surely cannot imagine her so stupid as not to be apprehensive of the delight, the Comfort, the happinesse, the honour his presence did impart, nor so unthankfull as not to acknowledge, and to her power expresse her gratitude. Certainly her soule was in a hea-

venly Trance when she contemplated the grace and felicity she had in Gods owne house, and before an Assembly of his elected people to acknowledge her gratitude for the inestimable benefits he had vouchsafed her, but especially for this, that in his glorious eyes she seem'd worthy (though in her selfe undeserving) in her owne name, and that of his chosen to present him with such a sacrifice, such a gift as exceedingly surpassed in excellency, all Hosts, Sacrifices, and Sacraments whatsoever, being indeed, their onely scope and end. *Anna* the Mother of *Samuel* is praised for her diligence in Prayer, the fruit whereof she reaped in her dispair'd of Fertility. And of our admired Virgin, we reade that she carefully

ly frequented the Temple, of which (being wiſe) ſhe knew the inſtitution, and (being pious) the cuſtome, which ſhe moſt religiouſly obſerved. Wherefore this day of her Purification, and at all times elſe, without all peradventure, ſhe much excelled *Anna*, and her whole ſexe in the fervency of her Oriſons, in the ardency of her love, in purity, and ſublimity of minde, in holineſſe of life, and divine contemplation. We may boldly conclude that ſhe pour'd out her prayers here in greater abundance than ſhe did in *Zacharies* houſe, where ſhe could not ſuppreſſe the flame of her zeale from breaking out into the praiſe of God her Saviour, in whom ſhe rejoyced. To this effect, happily, here ſhe pray'd.

O eternall and gracious God! I am below other women in merit, but above them all indebted to thy ſupreme Maieſty, for making me the Tabernacle of thy onely Sonne, the Temple of thy Spirit, and for this ſpeciall honour done mee in the Temple of thy Service, the congregation whereof makes me the onely point wherein the lines of their affection, and admiration doe meete. If women be reſpected for their fertillity, needs muſt I be in great eſteeme with all men, who (by thy eternall Predeſtination, and fatherly providence) have brought forth thy onely Sonne, their Redeemer. With a bowed heart, and bended knees I acknowledge that thou haſt faithfully and mercifully fulfilled all thoſe thy favourable promiſes made me by thy Angell Gabriel, *my Couſin*

Couſin Elizabeth, *and thy holy Prophets. Thou who can'ſt neither deceive, nor be deceived, haſt made me (the vertue of thy Spirit operating) a Mother, my virginall integrity ſtill preſerved. That long long'd for* Emanuel, *(than whom nothing greater, or better could be given by thee, or taken my me) I have at length produc'd to ſave all thoſe that beleeve in him. This magnificent immenſe, inexhauſtible, unvaluable Treaſure, this beloved Sonne of thine in whom thou art well pleaſed; This Saint of Saints, by whom all things in Heaven and Earth, are re-eſtabliſht, this Saviour of the world I here preſent to thee, as a gift moſt acceptable in thy ſight. He whom all Nations, and the Fathers themſelves have ſo much thirſted to ſee: The Angell of the new Teſtament, the ſeed of* Abraham,

the

the ſonne of David, *the King of* Iſrael, *in whom all generations are bleſſed, the Lord of the Temple is here come to illuſtrate his owne houſe. O mercifull Father! open the eyes of the dimme ſighted Iſraelites, that they may ſee the glorious Light that now ſhines on them, and not onely acknowledge, but worſhip their Meſſias, and imbrace him in their hearts, as I doe in mine Armes. Neither let the Rayes of this new borne ſtarre reflect onely on them, but on all thoſe alſo, who ſit in darkeneſſe, and the ſhadow of death, that to them it may reſtore life and luſtre. So ſhall they acknowledge thee, and him whom thou haſt ſent,* CHRIST IESVS, *and be made ſpirituall dwellings for thee to reſide in, there to receive due thankes and praiſe for ever and ever.*

Be-

Betweene her Purification, and Paſſion of her Sonne, ſhe is not often mentioned in holy Writ, but when ſhe is, it is ſtill to her praiſe and honour: As when her care for the poor made her petition Chriſt for Wine to revive, and refreſh their drooping, fainting Spirits; And when ſhe ſaid to him, *Why have you us'd us thus? your Father and I have beene to ſeeke you.* Whence all women may learne Humility, motherly care, and conjugall Faith. She who was without blemiſh, as being Gods owne Mother, whoſe chaſte boſome no carnall thought had ever entred, who lookt on all men with the ſame innocency & ſimplicity with which ſhe beheld Statues, deigned to call a poor ruſtical labouring man Huſband,

Her charity.

Her motherly care, together with her coniugal Faith and obedience.

band, from whose deare company, no flight, terrour, travaile, nor paines could separate her. But what the Scripture omitteth, must be supplied by our charitable imagination, which cannot but conceive all those her Actions buried in silence, to have beene of the same pure thred with the rest of her life. The truth of which we finde confirm'd in her perseverance in goodnesse, even to her sonnes end, and her owne.

Her demeanour at her Sonnes death.

At his death wee reade she was present, and there stood (saith the Evangelist) by the Crosse of Christ his Mother and her Sister Mary Cleophœ *and* Mary Magdalen. *When therefore Iesus saw his Mother, and his beloved Disciple standing by, he said to his Mother, Woman, behold thy Son,*

and

and he ſaid to his Diſciple, Behold thy Mother, and from that time he tooke her for his. His pardoning of the Thiefe is not a greater argument of his Mercy, than his taking care for his Mother was of his Piety. He gives Temperancy the cuſtody of Chaſtity, and commends theſe to each other who were reſolved to live and dye Virgins. Saint *Bernard* ſayes theſe words of Chriſt to his Mother, included much bitterneſſe, for they put her in minde that ſhe was to make a dammageable exchange of Chriſt for *Iohn*, of the Servant for his Lord, of the Diſciple for his Maſter, of the Sonne of God, for the ſonne of *Zebedæus*. And this was the reaſon (if we give beliefe to *Mantuan*) that he called her Woman, not Mother, leſt the very ſound

ſound of that deare word ſhould make her more ſenſible of his approaching loſſe, and force her into an immoderate griefe. But ſorrow was no Noveltie to her for that ſaying of Chriſt, *In this world, you ſhall have affliction*, was in her verified, whoſe life contained more miſeries then minuts, which ſhe patiently underwent, knowing that the more diſtreſſed ſhe was here, the more bleſſed ſhe ſhould be hereafter. And if we ſhall adde the light of Reaſon to the Evangelicall Truth, we ſhall ſoone perceive that a fatall ſadneſſe haunted her from the birth of her onely Sonne to his buriall. When ſhe was great with him, and readie to lye downe, the inhumanity of the Bethlemites was ſuch, that they confined her, and the Lord of all things

things to a Stable, and would not ſupply her with as much as Linnen, a Mantle, and other neceſſaries wherewithall ſhe might defend her ſelfe, and her ſweet Babe from the moyſture of the night, the ſharpeneſſe of the winter, and other intollerable inconveniences. When her Childe was eight daies old, ſhe ſaw him looſe bloud in his Circumciſion, which her divining ſoule miſgave her to be a Type of the deare remainder he was to ſhed. Then againe her minde was infinitely vexed for the butchery of thoſe guiltleſſe Children which were murthered for the ſake of her owne innocent Infant; of the ſorrow and miſerie of whoſe Mothers, her tender compaſſionating heart was a moſt competent Iudge. From this

bloudy Massacre to save her Saviour, she was constrained (without taking leave of her friends, or disposing of what was hers) to take her flight with him, & through danger, * darknesse, and horrour, to make her way into Ægypt. When he was twelve yeeres old, she lost him, an Accident more grievous than any of the former; for heretofore her study had been to preserve what she had, now her care was to finde what she had not. What an Agony her soule suffer'd at the lamentable tydings of the beheading of her Sonnes Forerunner, I leave to the considera-

*Vernulæus saies that those who flye from danger, travaile most by night, and therefore it is likely our blessed Lady did so.

ſideration of all thankefull ſoules; for ſhe could not without being ſtayned with ingratitude, but mourne for his abſence and violent departure out of the world, who had received ſo much joy at her preſence before he came into it. But above all theſe, the unequall'd Treacherie of *Iudas*, who deliver'd this Lambe of God, as a prey to theſe Wolves; the infidelity of his other Diſciples, the malignity of his Iudges, the cruelty of his Executioners conſpir'd to make her miſerable. Nor is it unlikely that ſhe bewailed the ingratitude, the obſtinacy and impiety of her Nation, who revil'd him that bleſſed them, and tortur'd him who came to ſave them. With what amazement and ſadneſſe was her heart ſurpriſed think

ye, when the newes came of her Sonnes being apprehended? But when she saw him forsaken by his friends, bound by his enemies, accused before the high Priests, derided by *Herod*, despis'd by the people; scourg'd, and tortur'd by the command of *Pilate*, his body trembling, torne, and pierced, besmear'd with his owne bloud, and hung between two Theeves; then, and never till then did the Sword foretold by *Simeon*, passe through her Soule. *Luther* saies this Prophecy of *Simeon* was spoken to her, not to *Ioseph*; for on her alone the whole weight of sorrow was to be laid. True it is that many differ about the interpretation of this Sword. To cleare all doubts, we must take notice that the holy Scriptures mention foure sorts of Swords. The

The first is a Corporall, or materiall sword, and of this Christ speakes to *Peter*, *All that use the Sword, shall perish with the Sword.*

The second is a spirituall Sword, of which Saint *Paul* makes mention, when he saies, *Receive the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

The third is a Sword of Scandall or Ambiguity, with which the Apostles themselves were strucken, when they forsooke their Master.

The fourth is the Sword of Griefe or Tribulation. With this the Prophet *David* averres the Soule of *Ioseph* to have beene *Psal.* 33. *Ps.* 105. *Gen.* 37.

pierc'd when his death was plotted first by his trecherous Brothers, next by his incontinent Mistresse.

That this Sword whereof *Simeon* Prophecied, could be no materiall one, is evident, in that we read not of any violent death she suffered. That it could not be the sword of the Spirit, is manifest; for the word of God was her daily delitious food at the same time when *Simeon* made this Prophecy. *Origen* indeed will have it to be the sword of Ambiguity or Infidelity: which erroneous opinion of his, is refuted by many great Fathers of the antient Church, and by *Franciscus Lumbertus*, an accute Protestant Doctor of the moderne in these words. *Those, saith*

In exposit. Evang. Lucæ cap. 2.

saith he, who will have this to be the sword of Infidelity, are not to be hearkened to; for (besides that they can produce no proofe of this their opinion) it is contradittory to the Text, most rash, and most untrue. How can it be that the sword of Infidelity should penetrate the breſt of Gods sacred Mother, into which, infidelity never made the least impreſsion? From the beginning, her Faith was most firme and intire. Let therefore those Blaſphemies and wicked ſlanders of carnall men be put to ſilence. I will attribute nothing to the bleſſed Virgin, but what I reade in the holy Writ, where ſhe is pronounced bleſſed, becauſe ſhee believ'd. We have many teſtimonies of her Faith, but of her Infidelity not one word is extant in the ſacred Scriptures. Yet this prophane aſſertion is not a whit ſtrange, or to be

marvelled at in *Origen*, who held that Christ dyed for the Angels, and the Starres, and whose soule was, indeed, no other than a Mynt of Heresies. *Melancton* affirmes, that her sorrow was much asswaged by her Faith, which assured her of his Resurrection. She knew she had borne the Messias, whose bloud was to wash away the sinnes of the world. Wherefore she might well be amaz'd, distrustfull she could not be at all. The holy Spirit certified her this was not a destroying death, but a triumphing. Her Faith, the oftner it was tryed in the furnace of af-

Her passive Fortitude, and Patience at the Death of her Sonne.
Melan. in cap. 27. Matth.

affliction, the brighter ſtill it ſhewed. She ſtood with the affection of a Mother, the paſſion of a woman, but with the conſtancy and fortitude of a man, in beholding her owne bloud ſpilt, her owne fleſh rent, and mangled before her face. With an unſhaken confidence, and a true internall valour, ſhe beheld his body naked, and ſcourg'd, his hands and feet nailed to the Croſſe: yet ſometimes the ſtrings of her relenting, mournefull heart were ready to cracke with the very thought of his cruell tortures and afflictions; but as often againe they were ſtrengthened and comforted with a full aſſurance that he ſhould overcome them all, and death it ſelfe. She ſtood here (her Sonne onely excepted) the prime patterne of a ſollid

ſollid Faith, and conſtant Patience to all poſteritie, in that neither the feare of Tribulation, of perſecution, of the wracke, of the ſcourge, or death it ſelfe could divide her from her Chriſt. She committed not that errour moſt incident to women, many of which gentle ſexe periſh in the midſt of their Lamentations, and will neither admit of Counſell, nor Comfort. She did not teare her haire, ſcratch her face, batter her boſome, ſeeke to ſtifle her ſelfe, or gave any other deſperate ſigne of a ragefull ſorrow, nor did ſhe curſe her enemies, or make imprecations for Vengeance, or ſo much as murmur againſt them; but attended the ſad event with the ſame calmeneſſe of minde with which this meeke Lambe did his end. Her car-

carriage was beyond the Levell of Cenſure, and in all things ſutable to the modeſty and gravity of ſuch a Matron. She fear'd not at all the fury of the Iewiſh Souldiers that environ'd her, but ſtood ſecure, and fac'd danger. Though ſhe was an eye witneſſe of his paſſion, and ſaw his Limbs diſtended, and wrack'd, yet did not the evils ſhe ſaw, wound her ſo deep as thoſe ſhe heard. The Roman Fencers uſed to have Wards, or Covers to ſave their Eares: She had greater need of ſuch to barre the entrance of blaſphemies able to provoke God (if his mercies were not above all his workes) utterly to deface Nature, and reduce the world to its firſt Chaos. She heard him call'd a Drunkard, a Blaſphemer, a breaker of the Sabboth,

both, a lover of Publicans and Sinners, nay a very Divell, who was her and Gods onely delight. Yet did not all these killing objects, these impious slanders, drive her into the mercilesse gripes of despaire; for she was confident that the two persons of the Trinity would not forsake the third.

Melan. in loco prædic.

Melancton commending this dismall story to our sad and serious contemplation, adviseth us, That when Tribulations and Death it selfe come upon us, we should imitate this holy Virgin, who mixed a heart killing sorrow for his death with a joyfull assurance of his Resurrection. *Consider, saith he, what a Conflict the Faith of* Mary *had. There was in her an extreme griefe linked with Faith and Hope. Let us in our death thus comfort our selves,*

ſelves, and harbour the ſame thoughts with Mary, *ſtill fixing on God the Eyes of our Faith.* And verily we muſt beleeve that no ſmall meaſure of Beliefe was required to temper and aſſwage ſo great a * ſorrow. If we conceive that ſhe was ſo without bowels, as not to grieve for the death and paſſion of her deareſt, and onely Sonne: we muſt withall beleeve with the Maniches, that he had a phantaſticke body, not made of his Mothers fleſh. No doubt, when (after man had left, and betray'd him) ſhe heard him cry out that God himſelfe had forſaken him alſo, her teares,

*Sophronius. ſer. de Aſſump. Beatæ Virg. *maintains that ſhe ſuffered more than all the Martyrs, in that the paſſion of the minde is greater than that of the body, and ſhee in ſoule felt moſt, becauſe her love to him was above all others.*

teares, her sighes, her groanes, her countenance, her very posture, her dolefull voyce, all united their forces to expresse the greatnesse of her sorrow. Listen and you shall heare her thus lament.

Her Lamentation is also expressed by S. Bernard, Serm. qui incipit, Signum magnum.

O my dearest Sonne, that thou who healest others, shouldst thy selfe be wounded! That thou who freest others, shouldst thy selfe be bound! That thou who art the Fountaine of Life, and Creator of the waters, shouldst thy selfe be thirsty! That thou who cloatheſt all things, shouldest thy selfe stand naked! O my dearest Master, how hast thou trespassed against this obdu-

rate

rate Nation! that it ſhould ſo thirſt after thy pretious bloud? Thou wouldeſt have cover'd them under the wings of thy gratious Providence, as a Henne doth her Chickens, but they choſe rather to periſh, than to come thither for ſhelter. With them the dead are more ſenſible of thy paſſion, than the living, and their devouring Sepulchers more mercifull then they themſelves. O my Sonne, my Sonne, that I ſhould ſee thee ſuffer, and not be able to ſuccour thee! O that I were an oblation as ſpotleſſe, and as gratious in thy Fathers ſight, as thou thy ſelfe, that all thy afflictions, all thy torments might be mine. Were my power correſpondent to my will, I would reſcue thee from Legions of thy enemies. But alas I am a weake woman, and all my ſtrength lyes in my tongue, which will onely ſerve mee

to

to deplore thy losse, and that I truely doe from the very bottome of my heart:

Thus, or to this purpose, questionlesse she bewail'd him dying; but when she once beheld him dead (Love and Beauty being banisht that face) and saw withall their malitious cruelty survive him, when she view'd his very carkasse pierc't, and water together with bloud flowing thence, when she had leisure to imbrace his dead body, to number his wounds, to kisse them, and to Essay with the holy water of her eyes to wash away his stripes: she then was so wholly oppressed with anguish of soule, that she ardently at that instant desired her soule, if possibly, might transmi-

grate

grate out of her living body, into his dead one. True it is that many affirme she felt not those torments which other women endure in Child-birth, who are liable to the malediction laid upon *Eve*: But if at his comming into the world, she was not sensible of any paine at all, certainely at his going out, the griefes of all women contracted into one, equals not hers alone. And assuredly her sorrow was much increased when she saw *Mary Magdalen*, and the other women so vehemently to grieve, whom his death not so nearly concern'd as it did her, nor were they so able as she to judge of his value. Then questionlesse in this, or the like phrase she renewed, and redoubled her complaints.

O my ſweeteſt Sonne! I bewaile mine owne, and the wretched condition of all thoſe, whoſe ſoules thou haſt feaſted ſo many yeares with thy melliflous Language. My griefe is anſwerable to my affection. If Samuel *lamented the death of a reprobate King, if* David *wept over wicked* Abſolon *with this exclamation,* Abſolon my Sonne, O my Sonne Abſolon; *can my teares be too prodigally powr'd upon thee, who art Sonne to me, and Righteouſneſſe it ſelfe? Who ſhall forbid or hinder me for crying out,* Ieſus my ſweet Sonne, O my ſweet Sonne Ieſus? *If thou didſt weepe over* Ieruſalem, *lamenting her deſtruction then at hand, ſhall I not bewaile thy neere approaching end? Thou didſt then compaſſionate the future Ruine of thoſe very*

ſtones

ſtones, which now with a ſilent gratitude ſeeme to condole, and weepe for thee. When thou cam'ſt to the Tombe of Lazarus, *thou wert ſo farre from reprehending the teares of others, that thou wept'ſt thy ſelfe for company. Thy owne example then warrants the juſtneſſe of my griefe; for when thou wert loving, the ſmall paine thou felt'ſt in the ſleeping of thy friend was, and ought to be more to mee, than the eternall ſleepe of* Lazarus *could be to thee. And as thy teares for him were tokens of thy humane nature, not ſignes of thy diffidence (in that thou knew'ſt he would forthwith ariſe) ſo are mine for thee, witneſſes of my wretched eſtate, not of my diſtruſt, who am aſſured of thy ſpeedy reſurrection. Nor doe I onely grieve my owne griefe for thee for mans ſake, I rejoyce in thy Fathers Grace, who delivers thee to*

*death, and in thy Charity who dost ſuffer it: So likewiſe in mans behalfe I am griev'd that he ſhould be the curſed cauſe of thoſe thy extreme torments: for as not to joy in the benefits thy death hath brought with it, would argue his ingratitude, ſo not to condole for the tortures that attend it, would demonſtrate his cruelty. And here I faithfully promiſe thee, that both I, while life, and thy Church, while the world doth laſt, ſhall yearely ſpend this dolefull * time of thy Tragicall expiration in Prayer, faſting, ſeverity, of diſcipline, maceration of the fleſh, and contrition of the ſpirit, as becomes thy mournefull Mother, and thy*

S. Bernard *cals this* Hebdomadam pœnoſam, *the weeke of pennance; and the high Dutch,* Die Martyr Wocken, *the Martyrs weeke.*

thy gratefull Spouſe to doe.

Thus condoling, thus bemoaning hers, and the generall loſſe, ſhe attended his herſe to the Sepulchre provided by *Ioſeph*, where never man was laid before; for it was not fit that Incorruptibility ſhould ſucceed corruption in the ſame lodging. This fragrant Flower was no ſooner ſet in the ground, but ſhe ſent many a deare drop after it to faſten it at the root; for ſhe knew within three dayes it ſhould ſpring up againe, not to grow in the earth, but to be tranſlated into Heaven, there for ever to flouriſh, and perfume the celeſtiall habitation. Nor were her eyes, ſaith *Damaſcen*, cloſed with his Monument, but watched themſelves almoſt blinde with a

greedy expectation to see the temple of his body built up againe, which three dayes since was destroyed. After many a longing looke she espied the Tombe to open, and her onely joy to issue forth, whom full well she knew by the countenance and figure of his Humanity, but farre better by the cleere proofes of his Godhead; for the Graves delivered up their dead, many of which appear'd to their friends in the holy City. Some, and those of great authority in the Church affirme, that after his Resurrection, she of all others saw him first, and whereas the Scripture seemeth to inferre that *Mary Magdalen* first beheld him, they thus expound it, That the Evangelists would not make his Mother the first witnesse of his Resur-

Resurrection (though indeed she was) knowing that her testimony by the Iewes would be more suspected than that of *Mary Magdalen*. I dare not positively conclude any thing herein, but I may safely maintaine that this her delight for his Resurrection, counterpois'd her griefe conceived for his death. In her was now made good that of the Psalmist; *According to the multitude of the griefes of my heart thy Comforts have rejoyced my soule*, and that of her Sonne, *Blessed are they that mourne, for they shall bee comforted.*

And who makes question but that she who with such unutterable pleasure discover'd his Resurrection faithfully, and closely waited on him, till his Ascention?

She who was as inſeparable to him as his ſhadow, without doubt, was on the Mount * *Olivet*, with other of the faithfull, when in the ſight of them all he aſcended. She heard, doubtleſſe, his laſt words, received his laſt benediction, and her ſight waited on him till the clowds imbrac't him, which it in vaine eſſay'd to penetrate. What Soule not it ſelfe tranſported with the view of a heavenly object, can ſuppoſe, much leſſe expreſſe what her contentment was when ſhe ſaw her owne fleſh flye above the reach of Envie, into the Armes of Glory? When ſhe beheld this high Prieſt, (his Sacrifice ended, and God fully appeas'd) enter Heaven there to ſit on the right hand of his Father, and to be the unceſſant and eternall Mediatour be-

* Epiphanius contra hæreſ. & libel. Ætij.

betwixt him and man: With benᵈ knees, erected hands, and eyes, ſhe worſhips him aſcending, and when her ſight tailes, her adoration continues. Her zeale paſſeth all the orbes betweene him, and her with greater facility, and ſubtility then the Lightning ſhooteth through the Ayre. Great is the vigour and force of the Spirit, when all things elſe ſet apart it is wholly intentive on the Meditation of its Creatour. When by contemplation it is ſeparated from the body, it thinkes onely on him, lives onely to him, and is (as it were drown'd) in an inundation of his love. When it hath extinguiſht the ſcorching lawleſſe deſires of the fleſh, and kindled the holy ones of the Spirit; the body rebels no longer, but becomes obe-

obedient to it in all things. When it hath once fixed its eyes on this beloved object, it never removeth them thence. When it is once illuminated with the beames of the holy Ghost, it is presently turn'd into all Eye, all Spirit, all Light, no otherwise than those things the fire once layes hold on, are turn'd into fire it selfe. Of those who live in Wedlocke, it is said that they are two in one flesh; and why may it not be said of Christ and the Soule wedded to him, that they are two in one Spirit? And if ever it might be reported of any, surely of this Holy Virgin, who (though she was devided from her Redeemer in Body) yet in soule she was united to him. When her eyes were growne dimme with her so long dwelling

on

on that part of Heaven where they left, and lost him, she cast them downe on the earth, the poverty whereof she commiserated in that it was deprived of this one Iewell, in value above all it had left. And now She returnes into the holy City not disconsolate, and dejected as other women are when they lose their onely childe; but with a cheerfull look for her Sons victory, who had triumphed not onely over the Iew, but death and hell it selfe. She made her will lacky Gods, and though she desired to be dissolved, and be with Christ, yet since it was his best pleasure she should continue longer here below, she readily assented, resolving by her example on earth, to furnish heaven with Saints. *Dammianus* sayes, that after

after her Sonnes deceaſe, ſhe remained ten daies in Prayer and Faſting, expecting with a fervent longing, the promiſed comming of the Spirit. Saint *Luke* witneſſeth that ſixe ſcore men and women were aſſembled in one rome, and joyned in hearty prayer, of the which, *Mary* the Mother of IESUS was one. And as he names her laſt, ſo her wonted Humility perſwades me that ſhe had the laſt, and * loweſt place, and ſate beneath the other ſinfull women of inferiour quality, in remembrance of her humble Lord now exalted. And it is more than probable that ſhe was preſent with the Apoſtles, when the Holy Ghoſt came upon them, and that ſhe there received the firſt fruits of the Spirit. After which time

*S. Bernhard. In ſerm. de verb. Apocalyp. Signum magnū.

we

we reade no more of her in holy Writ. For where, and with whom, how ſtrictly, and how piouſly ſhe liv'd after the Aſcention of Chriſt, till the houre of her death, ſaith *Idelphonius*, is onely knowne to God the ſearcher of hearts, and to the Angels her diligent Viſiters. The reaſon which many alledge why neither the reſt of her life, nor death are penned by the holy Evangeliſts is this, that the Apoſtles were ſo buſied about the converſion of the Iewes and the Gentiles, & enlarging of the Chriſtian Church, That they had no time to ſet downe the particular Acts of her life after her Sonnes Aſcention, nor the ſeverall Circumſtances of her death, as where, when, and how ſhe dyed. Some Authours peremptorily main-

Serm. 5. de Aſſump. Virg.

maintaine (upon what ground I know not) that ſhe liv'd to her ſeaventieth yeare, and to her laſt houre dwelt in *Ieruſalem*, neare to her Sonnes Sepulchre. Others upon no better warrant averre that ſhe went with *Iohn* into *Aſia*, and continued with him at *Epheſus* till her death, and urge the authority of *Ignatius*, who affirmes that ſhe wrote to him in theſe words, *I will come with* Iohn *to ſee thee, and thy friends, &c.* Concerning her death, Some avouch that the Apoſtles, and the moſt eminent of the Primitive Church, were preſent at it. *Damaſcen* ſaith that Chriſt was alſo there in perſon, and that he thus ſpake to her: *Come my bleſſed Mother into the reſt I have prepar'd for thee, and that ſhee thus in way of anſwer prayed to him: Into thy*

Damaſcen. ſer. de dormit. Virg.

Serm. de dormit. Virg.

thy hands; O my Sonne, I commend my Spirit: Receive that deare Soule which thou hast preserved free from all rebuke. As I will not justifie all these their Assertions for true, so on the other side I will not condemne them as erroneous, not being able to convince them of untruth, and for ought I know, they may have pass'd by unwritten Tradition from man to man. I will therefore affirmatively say nothing but this, that most assuredly her death was welcome to her, in that she had so often both meditated and practised it, having many times by austerity, and contemplation, departed this life ere she left it. If that of *Seneca* be true, that to dye well, is to dye willingly, then certainly she dyed the death of the Righteous. She was not

not ignorant that Death to the just is no other than a delivery from prison, a laying downe of a burthen, the end of a Pilgrimage, the unmanacling of the Soule, the discharging of a due debt to Nature, the returne into our true Country, the dore that opens into a never fading life, the entrance into the celestiall Kingdome, and the Usher that was to conduct her to her blessed Saviour, with whom she had mentally converfed ever since he left the earth: Since which time there be who avouch that she never willingly saw any man.

The

The Aſsumption.

What honor could to this great Queene be done,
More then be taken up to heauen high,
And there haue GOD for Father, Spoule, & ſonne.
The Angells wayte, the world ſtand wonding by

Her assumption.

The ſame modeſty I have ſhew'd in treating of her death, I ſhall reſerve in diſcourſing of her Aſſumption, which by many of the Fathers, all of the Romiſh Church, and ſome of the Reformed is held for an undoubted truth, though upon no ſounder proofes than the former produce concerning her departure hence. *Bullinger* directly backs this opinion. *We doe beleeve, ſaith he, that the wombe of the God-bearing Virgin, and the Temple of the holy Ghoſt, that is, her ſacred body, to have beene aſſumed into heaven.* *Brentius* leaves it indifferent to us to beleeve whether or no ſhe aſcended in Soule, in body, or both. *It might well be, ſaith he, that as* Enoch *was tranſlated in body into heaven, and as many bodies of the Saints did riſe with Chriſt,*

Lib. de origine erroris, cap. 16.

Christ; *So* Mary *also might in body be assumed into Heaven. But most certain it is that she obtained everlasting Felicity*. And some there be who demand why God might not manifest his power by her, privy to so many divine secrets and mysteries, as well as by an Angell, or as by *Elias*, who after long prayer, was taken up in a Fiery Chariot. Some againe, (who hold that the dead who arose with Christ, ascended with him into Glory, and were not againe reduc't into Ashes) thinke the Assumption of *Mary* altogether as likely.

Homil. 1. in Die Assump. Virgin. *See* Athanasius *on this very point, a Father of great repute, both with the Latines and the Greekes in his* serm. in Evang. de sanctissima Deipara. *And* Iohannes Rivius *in his Booke* de abusibus Ecclesiæ *though hee dares not maintaine her corporal Assumption, yet hee will not deny it, as being a thing probable enough.*

Damascen saith, the

workes of the Deity are therefore possible, because omnipotent, and that there are some things, which though they are wholly omitted in holy Scriptures, yet upon evident reasons they are believ'd, and exemplifies his position in the Assumption of the Virgin *Mary*. *Dammianus* argues thus, That as conceiving without sinne, shee brought forth her Sonne without paine, a curse laid on all other women: so might it well be that she who was without sinne, might overcome Death, the reward of it. Some goe about to prove it by the Text, *Arise Lord into thy rest, thou, and the Arke of thy Sanctification.* Nay, I have read a moderne Oratour, who thus elegantly describes the manner of it: *When, saith hee, the Soule of this Sweet one, reactuated her*

Ps. 131.

her body, ſhe aroſe in Triumph from her Sepulcher, and was aſſumed into Heaven. In her paſſage thither, the orbes bowed and bended themſelves to make her a triumphant Arch through which ſhee might paſſe in greater ſtate. The Sunne with his brighteſt beames imbrac't her, that it might be ſaid, A woman was cloath'd with the Sunne. *The Moone ſtooped to her, that it might be divulg'd the Moone was under her feet. The brighteſt of the Starres interwove themſelves to make her a radiant Crowne, &c.* But this deſcription is no more theologicall, than the conſent of the orbes is Philoſophicall, and is no way correſpondent to the dignity of our Sacred ſubject, on whoſe triumphant entry into Heaven, having beene a faithfull, and reve-

rent Attender, I will now returne to vindicate her honour here on Earth, and make an Apology to Christians (with shame and horrour I speake it) for Christs owne Mother.

It may please then the gentle Reader to understand that two questions arise amongst the Moderne Divines. The one whether or no she merited to be the Mother of God; the other which way she could deserve that greatest of Glories. For the first, they affirm that never any Creature merited so great a blessing as the incarnation of Gods owne Sonne. For he sent, say they, his Sonne into the world, not urg'd thereto by our merits, but out of his owne meere Grace and Goodnesse. It

was

was a worke of his Charity, and condeſcending, not of retribution, or obligation: and therefore that he choſe not the Virgin *Mary* to be the Mother of Chriſt, as ſhe was a Virgin, humble, obedient, adorn'd with Faith, Charity, and other divine vertues, but becauſe God had decreed her to beare his onely Sonne, therefore his beſt pleaſure was, ſhe ſhould be Miſtreſſe of perfections ſuteable to ſo high a Calling. Wherfore Saint *Paul* ſaies, Becauſe God hath predeſtinated us, therefore he calles, juſtifies, and glorifies us, and not becauſe we are juſt, therefore he electeth us. Againe, they argue thus, that all our merits depend on Chriſt, and are deriv'd from him, and therefore ſhe was without all deſert before

her Sonne had imparted it to her. That this was well knowne to her, is manifeſtly proved by her divine Hymne, in which ſhe acknowledgeth all good to proceed from him, and therefore to him aſcribeth all honour and glory. Others her Champions, who courragiouſly fight, not onely for her heavenly, but earthly triumph, confeſſe that ſhe was not prefer'd to that ſupreme dignity by deſert, but by Congruity, as they call it: that is, not that ſhe was abſolutely worthy of ſo great a grace, but that ſince God had fixed a decree to ſend his dearely beloved Sonne amongſt us, ſhe of all others was the fitteſt to conceive and beare him. But here againe they differ about the way; in that ſo many waies they hold her capable of this

this ineſtimable Diadem. Some give the preheminency to her Virginity, and ſay, the love of that drew the Sonne out of the boſome of his Father, into her hallowed wombe; and therefore the Text ſaies not, that a faithfull, an obedient, or an humble ſhall conceive, but a Virgin. Others attribute this ſupreme favour to her Faith, by which (as Saint *Paul* demonſtrates all the miraculous workes of the old Teſtament have beene begunne and perfected: Wherefore her Couſin *Elizabeth* ſaid to her, *Bleſſed art thou, becauſe thou haſt beleeved.* Some aſcribe this infinite honour done her, to her Humility, to which all other vertues flow, no otherwiſe than the waters naturally runne to the loweſt places. This caus'd her to

ſay

ſay in her gratefull Hymne, *Thou haſt regarded the lowlineſſe of thy Hand-maid.* Others impute the conferring of this greateſt bleſſing on her, to her obedience, in that ſhe committed all to the will of the higheſt, with this proteſtation, *Behold the Hand-maid of the Lord, be it to mee according to thy Word.* Others give her Charity the upper hand, which as Saint *Paul* teſtifies, gives life and ſpirit to all other vertues, they being without it no other than dead Images. Laſtly, ſome there are who will not award the Crowne to this or that peculiar vertue reſiding in her, but to the united Harmony of them altogether; for they ſay, it is not this ſtring, or that, makes the Muſicke, but the accord, and conſent of all. For my owne part,

part, (Divinity not being the ſpheare wherein my ſtudies move) a modeſt inquiſition will better become me, than a bold and peremptory Concluſion in any point of Controverſie. Wherfore I moſt humbly ſubmit this, and all things elſe divine, by me handled, to the Cenſure and determination of the Church of *England*, whoſe not Connivence alone, but approbation I know I ſhall have in boldly affirming that ſhe was a tranſcendent Creature, not to be ranked in reſpect of her worth, with any of her ſexe, but to have a place aſſign'd her apart, and above them all; being not to be conſidered as a meere woman, but as a Type, or an Idæa of an Accompliſht piety. They who uphold the latter of

of the aforesaid opinions, erre not so much in my judgement, in the adoring extreame, as some too severe maintainers of the former, doe in the neglecting. They are so farre from praising her themselves, that they most unjustly deprive her of the praise given her by others. The Puritans in generall, but especially the obstinate *non-Conformists* of this Land; are those I meane, who as in their Course oratory they called Queene ELIZABETH, *Queene Besse*, So they give this Holy Virgin no higher a stile, than of *Mal, Gods Maide*. They reject all Testimonies of her worth, as *Haile* Mary *full of Grace*, *The Lord is with thee*, and, *thou hast found grace with God*, and, *Hee that is mighty, hath magnified mee*, and

* *I have both heard these irreverent speeches, and read them censurd*

All

All generations ſhall call mee Bleſſed, and, *Bleſſed is the wombe that bore thee*, and *Bleſſed are the paps that gave thee ſucke*, and *whence comes this that the Mother of my Lord ſhould come to me?* and, *Bleſſed art thou amongſt women*, and, *Bleſſed is the fruit of thy wombe*. They abhorre to heare her call'd *Domina*, *Lady*, or *Deipara*, *God-bearing*, few of them being ſo learned, even in their owne Faculty, as to know that they who ſo ſtile her, thinke not that the God-head proceeds from her, but that ſhe brought forth Chriſt, in whom was the union of both Natures, and

in a Manuſcript of a moſt learned Doctour of the Engliſh Church. And this is very credible to al ſuch as heare and peruſe their illiterate Sermons, full of invectives againſt the antient Saints, and Fathers of the Church, and abounding with predications of their owne ignorant Brethren.

and therefore they being inſepa-rable, ſhe muſt by ſtrong conſe-quence be deliver'd of both God and Man. And why are they de-terr'd from giving her theſe ho-nourable Epithites? Becauſe for-ſooth they challenge to them-ſelves a greater meaſure of know-ledge, but a leſſer of Piety than did their Anceſtors. By diſclaiming words, and phraſes familiar to Antiquity, and by inventing new leſſe reverent, and ſignificant; they give all men to underſtand that they had rather be reputed good Grammarians, than Chri-ſtians, and had rather give names to the Church, than accept them from her, and cheriſh prophane Novelties, rather than allow of Reverent Antiquities. They wreſt many places of Scripture to prove

that

that Christ himselfe slighted and rebuked her, which depravations of theirs (were my Readers Turkes) I would draw into the Light and lay their deformity open to all; but it is needlesse (I trust) to informe a Christian, that he who hath said, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother*, would surely never breake his owne Commandement, and by slighting his Mother, trench upon a sinne of all others most detestable in his sight, Ingratitude. Of one thing I will assure them, till they are good *Marians*, they shall never be good *Christians*; while they derogate from the dignity of the *Mother*, they cannot truely honour the *Sonne*. They are I confesse, much more favourable to her, than the Iewes, but by

by farre more detracting from her than the Turkes, which Assertion of mine is strengthened with evident proofes both out of the Iewish *Thalmud*, and Turkish *Alchoran*. The Iewes call her *Thlua*, as much as to say, Butchereſſe, or the wife of a Butcher, and *Sona*, a publike sinner, and *Thmea*, one polluted with all manner of uncleane and filthy luſt. And all of their Religion are enjoyned in ſolemne Prayer made in their Sinagogues thrice every day to curſe Chriſt, his Mother, and all the Chriſtian Sect, as is to be found at large in the third Booke of the Thalmud, wholly compos'd of ridiculous Fables, groſſe Errors, and horrid Blaſphemies. True it is That the Turkiſh Alchoran now

acknow-

acknowledgeth Christ to be God, and now againe denies him, taking him in at the fore-dore, and shutting him out at the backe, yet doe they hold him the greateſt of Prophets next their *Mahomet*. But his Mother they magnifie above all women that ever breathed this Ayre. Let us heare this Oracle ſpeake, in all things elſe falſe, but in this moſt true. Theſe enſuing are the very formall words of the Alchoran. *O* Mary, *excellent above all men and women, who perſevereſt in the ſtudy of God onely*. And in another place, *O* Mary, *God hath choſen thee, and purified thee, hee hath elected thee to make thee famous above the women of all Ages*: and againe, Mary *by behaving her ſelfe wiſely, is guilty neither of Malice, nor any wicked-*

neſſe, which cauſed us to breath our ſoule into her. Laſtly, that Many men have beene perfect, but no woman was ever found perfect, but Mary the Mother of Ieſus. But though truth is to be imbrac't where ever we finde it, yet it will appeare more gracefull in the mouthes of Chriſtians, whoſe moſt learned, moſt eloquent, and moſt judicious Doctour, we will produce, giving this Teſtimony of this our deareſt Lady. *Except (ſaith he) the holy Virgin* Mary, *(whom for the honour I owe my Lord and Maſter, I will not name when ſinne is my ſubject) whom to have had grace infus'd into her, wholly to ſubdue ſinne, wee know by this, that ſhee was thought worthy to conceive and bring forth him, who aſſuredly was without ſinne. This Virgin, I*

S. Auſtin lib. de nat. & grat. cap. 36.

ſay,

ſay, excepted, if we could Recall, and Aſſemble together all the Saints departed, and ſhould aske them, if they were without ſinne, they would unanimouſly thus anſwere: *If we ſhould ſay we have no ſinne, we deceive our ſelves, and there is no truth in us.* But becauſe the Fathers are no way ſuſpected of neglect towards her, we will ſpare their verdicts, and chiefly inſert their Commendations of her, who were the firſt Reformers of our Church. *Luther* ſhall be their Leader, who ſaith, *That none but the Virgin* Mary *either was, or ever ſhall be ſo holy: That the fruit of her wombe ſhall be bleſſed, ſince no other conceives without pleaſure and ſinne:* and againe, *In this is* Mary *bleſſed, That ſo great gifts are given to her, as ſurpaſſe humane underſtanding.*

For hence all honour and beatitude proceeds, that in the Vniverſall humane race one perſon ſhould be ſuperiour to the reſt to whom none ſhould be equall, becauſe one and the ſame Sonne is common to her with the heavenly Father. This he applyes to that ſaying of *Mary. Hee that is mighty hath magnified mee, &c.* The ſame Author in another place ſayes, *Mary is our Mother, Chriſt our Brother, and God our Father, and that all this is true, the Faithfull by effect doe finde. Calvin* cals her his *Miſtreſſe. Wee willingly, ſaith he, take* Mary *for our Miſtreſſe, to whoſe doctrine and precepts we are obedient.* * *Eraſmus* ſtiles her his

* *Though* Eraſmus *was not a Reformer of our Church, yet he is much ſuſpected by the Romiſh Church, and moſt ſerviceable to the Proteſtant in the ſetting out of the Fathers.*

Sa-

saviouresse. *Oecolampadius* thus delivers his approbation of her. *I trust in God it shall never be said of me, that I did oppose the dignity of* Mary, *towards whom to be never so little ill affected, I hold to be a most certaine signe of a Reprobate minde. She who is above all, Queene of all, whom God above all hath honoured, should not she be esteemed amongst all the most eminent?* *Bucerus* protesteth, *That a godly minde will not judge but charitably and prously of her, who brought forth Christ our Lord:* *Bullingerus* concludes; *If* Mary *be blessed amongst all women, and to bee pronounced blessed by all Nations, most cursed are the Iewes, who never cease to revile and slander her; and most unhappy are those Counterfeit Christians, who (being little better than Iewes) robbe her of*

the praise due to her. Needs must she be indued with a singular most select and perpetuall Virginity and purity, who is especially chosen by God to be the Temple of his Sonne, and the Mother of the most holy. Now if any of these contradict themselves by pulling downe in other places those Trophies of her praise which here they have erected, they are to be answered as the Satyre did the Man with whom he said he would no longer converse, because he saw hot and cold breath to issue from the same Mouth. But to leave them; All parts of the world have produced Admirers of her worth.

Syria

Syria hath brought forth Ephraim.

Antiochia Saint Chryſoſtome.

Capadocia Saint Baſill, and Saint Nazianzen.

Conſtantinople, Germanus and Proclus.

Dalmatia, Saint Hierome.

Germany, Rupertus, Albertus, and Agrippa.

England, Beda.

France, Bernhard.

Spaine, Alphonſus.

Italy, Aquinas and Bonauenture.

Affrick, Saint *Cyprian*, and Saint *Austin*.

Greece, *Dionysius Areopagita*, *&c.*

To these succeed famous Christian Poets, antient and Moderne, who have written Pannegyricks upon her, as *Beda*.

Gregorius Nazianzenus.
Innocentius Pontifex.
Actius Sanazarius.
Adam de Sancto victore.
Alcimus Avitus.
Antonius Muretus.
Aurelius Prudentius.

Bap-

Baptista Mantuanus.
Claudianus.
Franciscus Petrarcha.
Godfridus Viterbiensis.
Hieronymus Vida.
Paulinus.
D. Philippus Menzelius.
Rudolphus Agricola.
Sedulius.
Venantius Fortunatus.

To these I adde many Emperours, Princes, and Princesses, and a world of devout great ones, who have beene her professed admirers, as *Constantine* the great.

Charles

Charles the great.

Pulcheria Augusta.

Henry the second, Emperour.

Alphonsus the chaste in *Spaine.*

Edouardus in *Hungaria.*

Boliſlaus in *Polonia.*

Venceſlaus in *Bohemia.*

All which are Canonized for Saints, and have erected and dedicated Temples to her Memory. Neither have the Princes of this our Ile beene defective in doing her all possible honour, and in Consecrating Chappels and Temples to her Memory. *Fredericke* the third Emperour, made the Contemplation of her, almost his onely food: *Stephanus*, King of *Hungarie*, called his kingdome the *Marian Family*. In this glorious Family, whole kingdomes and Common-wealths have enrolled themselves. My Arithmeticke will not serve mee to number all those who have Registred their names in the Sodalitie of the Rosary of this our blessed Lady, the originall of which

which is derived from the battaile of *Naupactun*, gain'd by *Iohn* of *Austria*, and the Christians, which victory was attributed to her intercession with her Sonne. The Colonian Sodallity first instituted, had out of *Lovaine*, 4000. out of *Brabant*, 30000. out of *Gueldria*, 4000. out of *Holland* and *Zeland*, 7000. &c. Many holy Orders also are of this Sodality, as the Benedictines, the Cistertians, the Franciscans, the Carthusians, and many others. If all these Testimonies and Examples of great worthy and pious people will not move us to honour her, we shall be judg'd both unworthy of this life, and ignorant of that better to come. For shame let not us alone deny her that honour and praise which all the world allowes her.

After

After these impartiall witnesses of her worth, we will place those divine priviledges imparted to her by the Almighty, for which we have (if that alone were sufficient) the Authority of many pious, learned men.

First, they affirme, That her Chaste eyes sent forth such divine beames that (though her Lovelinesse moved not onely all mindes to honour her, and all Eyes to gaze on hers) yet they never kindled an unholy fire in the most Adulterate bosome. A sacred priviledge peculiar to this Saint alone; for it was the will of her omnipotent Sonne, that neither Sathan nor his Ministers should conspire the overthrow of that chiefe Temple of

1 *Priviledge.*

of his Spirit, which his flesh had inhabited so long, nor any impure thought ayme at the mudding of this purest Fountaine. Whether her prophetick Soule foresaw the snares of the ungodly, and so shun'd them, they say not, once for certaine they averre, that Temptations aym'd at her, broke like Haile against a Rocke, nor could all the Engines of the world, the flesh, and the Divell hurt her more, then can the vapours arising from the earth, reach the holy inhabitants of Heaven. And this opinion (for ought I know, I submit it to better judgements) may without, or profanation, or blasphemy, be admitted into all honest bosomes: for if beyond the power of nature he preserved *Ionas* entire in the Whales

Belly, if he protected *Daniel* from the ravenous Lyons, should not he secure her from Corruption whom he had adorn'd with so many vertues and dignities?

Next, they hold that she was not onely without blemish, but her very lookes sent forth such heavenly rayes, that whosoever beheld them, drew thence a vestall fire that never went out, and vowed an everlasting Virginity. If this be a truth, it is a curious one, and it is not materiall at all whether or no it be believed, or rejected. 2 *Priviledge.*

Thirdly, that she conceiv'd and bore her Sonne, not onely without paine (the common Curse annexed to Childe-bearing) but with 3 *Priviledge.*

with infinite delight. This also is a Curiosity, and of no importance whether it be swallowed or no.

Fourthly and lastly, that she had a Frigidity of Soule, which quencht in her all heat of carnall concupiscence. This last priviledge is implyed in the first, and may perchance safely be received. The truth is, we may securely give her all humane attributes (not encroaching on the divine) for she was in dignity above all, but God himselfe. Faith and Charity, the fulnesse of the Law were in her at full. She was in an active and contemplative life, admirable. The Tongue esteemed the worst part in a woman, was in her the best, which well might charme Eares, offend them it could not. Her

Soule

Soule weigh'd her Conceptions, and gave them a rayment of vertues owne hiew; for certainly so cleere thoughts were apparell'd in as faire words. She who both after her conception, and at other times is commended to us by the sacred Scriptures, for laying up all holy Sayings in her heart, can we imagine that she could speake amisse? Neither could she commit any undecent Act, who liv'd in a Light to others inaccessible. They who maintaine that for a time the whole Militant Church was in her alone, have probability to backe them; for I know not in whom else it could remaine, when his Apostles, Disciples, Friends, Kindred, and all others forsooke Christ, she onely excepted, who would not leave him, who from

before his birth, had ſtucke to her. I will conclude with this Aſſertion, That if ever the Soule of any mortall enjoyed here on earth the embraces of her heavenly Spouſe, and tooke from him a kiſſe ſweeter than all the Eaſterne Odours, this was ſhe.

And

And here, O blessed Virgin! I leave to discourse further of thee, and direct my speech to thee. O thou eternall glory of thy sexe! had the Queene of Sheba *seene thee, as she did* Salomon, *shee had not so soone beene delivered out of the Trance into which her Admiration cast her. In thee shee might have discovered all the perfections of which woman kinde is capable, who wer't indeed vertually thy sexe. In thee* Aspatia *might have found her Modesty,* Livia *her Prudency,* Sulpitia *her*

Apostrophe Authoris.

her Majeſtie and Gravity, Cornelia her Patience, Lucretia her Chaſtity, Porcia her Fortitude, Tanaquill her Induſtry, Plautina her frugality, and all theſe in eminency. But why talke I of the Heathen to thee, who didſt not onely outſtrip in manifold vertues all the Femall, but the Maſculine Saints themſelves? Thou didſt excell Abel in Innocency, Abraham in Faith, Iſaac in Obedience, David in Gentleneſſe, the Prophets and Apoſtles in Piety, and the Martyrs in Patience. O thou whom Heaven would have of

the

the same constancy, purity, and sublimity with it selfe, thou art so farre from having an equall, that all thy sexe cannot afford a worthy witnesse of thy Excellencies! O thou Mother of the true Moses, *who never put on the yoke of* Pharaoh, *but stood free in the middest of* Egypt! *Thou rodde of* Iesse, *alwaies straight, who broughtst forth the fruit of life! thou wert here a terrestriall Paradice, whereinto Serpent never entred, on which Gods malediction was never impos'd, and hast no doubt, now in the cœlestiall Paradice a conspicuous*

ſeate above all the Angelicall orders, and next thy glorifi'd Sonne himſelfe. For if Chriſts promiſe to all his fellow feeling members, that if they ſuffer with him, they ſhall raigne with him, if they dye with him, they ſhall live with him; what eminent place in Heaven ſhalt thou have aſſigned thee, who in ſoule didſt ſuffer for him more, than all his Martyrs? O thou baſhfull Morne that didſt pr cede and produce our Sunne! Thou Circumſcription (if I may ſo ſay) of the uncircumſcribed! Thou roote to this Herbe of Grace! Thou Mother of our Crea-

Creatour! Thou Nurse to him by whom all things are fed! Thou Comprehender of the incomprehensible! Thou bearer of him whose word sustaines the Globes! Thou who didst impart flesh to him, who wanted nothing else! Thou Sarah, thou Mother of many Nations, who brought forth our Isaac, our Laughter, when a just sorrow conceiv'd for a losse esteem'd irreparable had clouded this inferiour world! O pardon, gratious Princesse, my weake endeavours to summe up thy value, which come as short of thee, as my head does of Hea-

ven. Nothing that is not it selfe glorified, can expresse thy glory to the height. Thou deservst a Quire of Queenes here, and another of Angels in Heaven to sing thy praises. Were all the Earths brood, the droppes, the sands of the sea, and the starres of heaven tongued, they could not all expresse thee so well, as silent extasie. I confesse, O my sweetest Lady! that now I have said all I can of thee, I have but but done like Timanthes, a great Master of his Art, who being to expresse the vastnesse of a Cyclops in a small table, drew onely

onely his Thumbe, *by which the ſpectators might judge of his large proportion.* To *give thee an eſtimation anſwerable to thy merit, is a thing impoſsible: I muſt therefore be content to doe by thee, as the antient Heathen did by the Images of their* Gods, *on whoſe heads, when by reaſon of their height, they could not place the Crownes, offer'd to their Deities, they humbly layd them at their feet.*

FINIS.

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